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PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPON

RELIGION,

AND

A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

NEW-YORK:

ROBERT CARTER, 58, CANAL-STREET.

1839.



CONTENTS.

PART I.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION	25
Art. I. I believe there is one God, the Being of all beings	28
Art. II. I believe, that whatsoever the most high God would have me to believe or do, in order to his glory and my happiness, he hath revealed it to me in his holy Scriptures	31
Art. III. I believe, that as there is one God, so this one God is three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost	48
Art. IV. I believe, that I was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity ; and that ever since I have been continually conceiving mischief, and bringing forth vanity	50
Art. V. I believe the Son of God became the Son of man, that I, the son of man, might become the son of God	51
Art. VI. I believe, that Christ lived to God, and died for sin, that I might die to sin, and live with God	55
Art. VII. I believe, that Christ rose from the grave, that I might rise from sin ; and that he is ascended into heaven, that I may come unto him	57
Art. VIII. I believe, that my person is only justified by the merit of Christ imputed to me ; and that my nature is only sanctified by the Spirit of Christ implanted in me	59
Art. IX. I believe, God entered into a double covenant with man, the covenant of works made with the first, and the covenant of grace made in the second Adam	69
Art. X. I believe, that as God entered into a covenant of grace with us, so hath he signed this covenant to us by a double seal, Baptism and the Lord's Supper	75
Art. XI. I believe, that after a short separation, my soul and body shall be united together again, in order to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be finally sentenced according to my deserts	82

Art. XII. I believe, there are two other worlds, besides this I live in ; a world of misery for unrepenting sinners, and a world of glory for believing saints

88

RESOLUTIONS

FORMED FROM THE FOREGOING ARTICLES.

Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to walk by rule, and therefore think it necessary to resolve upon rules to walk by	94
Resol. II. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to make the divine word the rule of all the rules I propose to myself	95
Resol. III. I am resolved, that as I am not able to think or do any thing that is good, without the influence of the divine grace ; so I will not pretend to merit any favour from God, upon account of any thing I do for his glory and service	96

Concerning my conversation in general.

Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to make Christ the pattern of my life here, that so Christ may be the portion of my soul hereafter	98
Resol. II. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to walk by faith, and not by sight, on earth, that so I may live by sight, and not by faith, in heaven	99
Resol. III. I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to be looking upon God, as always looking upon me	100

Concerning my thoughts.

Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to watch as much over the inward motions of my heart, as the outward actions of my life	102
Resol. II. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to stop every thought at its first entering into my heart, and to examine it, whence it comes, and whither it tends	103
Resol. III. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be as fearful to let in vain, as careful to keep out sinful thoughts	104
Resol. IV. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be always exer-	

cising my thoughts upon good objects, that the devil may not exercise them upon bad	105
Resol. V. I am resolved, by the grace of God, so to marshal my thoughts, that they may not one justle out another, nor any of them prejudice the business I am about	107

Concerning my affections.

Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my affections subservient to the dictates of my understanding, that my reason may not follow, but guide my affections	109
Resol. II. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to love God, as the best of goods, and to hate sin as the worst of evils	111
Resol. III. I am resolved, by the assistance of divine grace, to make God the principal object of my joy, and sin the principal object of my grief and sorrow; so as to grieve for sin more than suffering, and for suffering only for sin's sake	113
Resol. IV. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to desire spiritual mercies more then temporal; and temporal mercies only in reference to spiritual	114
Resol. V. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to hope for nothing so much as the promises, and to fear nothing so much as the threatenings, of God	116
Resol. VI. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to arm myself with that spiritual courage and magnanimity, as to press through all duties and difficulties whatsoever, for the advancement of God's glory, and my own happiness	118
Resol. VII. I am resolved, by the grace of God, so to be angry, as not to sin, and, therefore, to be angry at nothing but sin	119

Concerning my words.

Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to speak much, lest I often speak too much; and not to speak at all, rather than to no purpose	122
Resol. II. I am resolved, by the grace of God, not only to avoid the wickedness of swearing falsely, but likewise the very appearance of swearing at all	123
Resol. III. I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my tongue and heart go together, so as never to speak with the one, what I do not think in the other	125
Resol. IV. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to speak of other men's sins only before their faces, and of their virtues only behind their backs	126
Resol. V. I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to speak reverently to my superiors, humbly to my inferiors, and civilly to all	127

Concerning my actions.

- Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do every thing in obedience to the will of God 130
- Resol. II. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do every thing with prudence and discretion as well as with zeal and affection 131
- Resol. III. I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to set my hand, my head, or my heart, about any thing, but what I verily believe is good in itself, and will be esteemed so by God 132
- Resol. IV. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do all things for the glory of God 134
- Resol. V. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to mingle such recreations with my business, as to further my business by my recreations 135

Concerning my relations.

- Resol. I. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to honour and obey the king, or prince, whom God is pleased to set over me, as well as to expect he should safeguard and protect me, whom God is pleased to set under him 137
- Resol. II. I am resolved, by the same divine grace, to be as constant in loving my wife, as cautious in choosing her 134
- Resol. III. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do my endeavour to give to God whatsoever children he shall be pleased to give to me, that as they are mine by nature, they may be his by grace 142
- Resol. IV. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do my duty to my servants, as well as expect they should do theirs to me 144
- Resol. V. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to feed the flock that God shall set me over, with wholesome food, neither starving them by idleness, poisoning them with error, nor puffing them up with impertinencies 145
- Resol. VI. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be as faithful and constant to my friend, as I would have my friend to be faithful and constant to me 148

Concerning my talents.

- Resol. I. I am resolved, if possible, to redeem my time past, by using a double diligence for the future, to employ and improve all the gifts and endowments, both of body and mind, to the glory and service of my great Creator 150
- Resol. II. I am resolved, by the divine grace, to employ my riches, the outward blessings of Providence, to the same end; and to

observe such a due medium in the dispensing of them, as to avoid prodigality on the one hand, and covetousness on the other	152
Resol. III. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve the authority God gives me over others, to the suppression of vice, and the encouragement of virtue; and so for the exaltation of God's name on earth, and their souls in heaven	154
Resol. IV. I am resolved, by the divine grace, to improve the affections God stirs up in others towards me, to the stirring up of their affections towards God	155
Resol. V. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve every good thought to the producing of good affections in myself, and as good actions with respect to God	157
Resol. VI. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve every affliction God lays upon me, as an earnest or token of his affection towards me	158

PART II.

On the Education of a Christian.

THE advantage of being well-grounded in the Christian religion	167
The want of this is the occasion of so little true religion among us	168
The direction of the Church in this behalf, and of God himself	169
The obligation on parents to observe it	170
The Church Catechism most easy, and yet most full and comprehensive	ibid.
The necessity of being made Christians by baptism	171
And that for children as well as adult persons	ibid.
The promise made at baptism implies the necessity of Christian instruction	172
The several parts of that promise lead to the knowledge of all the rest of the Catechism, viz. of the Creed, Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and doctrine of the Sacraments	ibid.
Directions for instructing children in this Catechism	173
They must begin with them betimes	ibid.
Employ others to teach them, if they cannot do it themselves	175
When taught the Catechism, send them, for further instruction, to the minister	ibid.
The great obligation upon parents to instruct their children	177
Abraham's care, in this respect, rewarded, and Eli's neglect punished	ibid.
The advantage of it to themselves, and to their children	178
An exhortation to it	179

On the Knowledge of God.

Though all men agree about religion in general, yet they differ about nothing more than the particular exercise of it	180
Our form of worship incomparably the best	181
To serve God aright, it is necessary to know that God whom we are to serve	182
To know that he is	ibid.
And what he is, both in himself	183
And to us	ibid.
To know all his attributes	ibid.
All his works	ibid.
To know that in the one Godhead there are Three Persons	184

Our knowledge of God must be also practical and experimental	184
That all this knowledge is necessary towards serving God aright	185
The error of the Church of Rome in this particular	186
Arguments to induce us to seek after this knowledge	ibid.
How we ought to serve God	188
What it is to serve him	189
Mistakes about this	ibid.
We must serve him with all we are	ibid.
And with all we have	ibid.
Pay him sincere and universal obedience	190
We must serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind	192
For what reason we ought thus to serve God	193
An exhortation to it	194

On the Mystery of the Trinity.

It is impossible to be truly religious without knowing God	197
Which we cannot do truly but by the light of revelation	198
Which alone discovers to us the mystery of the Trinity	ibid.
Into which our Saviour commands all nations to be baptized	ibid.
Where we must consider the work he sends his apostles about	199
What is meant by teaching	ibid.
The mistake of which occasioned the sect of the Anabaptists	200
Our Saviour speaks not of teaching before baptism, but after it	ibid.
So that infant baptism is commanded in those very words, which are pretended to forbid it	ibid.
The large extent of the commission here given	201
Not understood by the apostles themselves, till interpreted from heaven	ibid.
The manner of admitting all nations into Christ's church	202
The church always baptized in the name of the Three Persons	203
The Trinity of Persons proved from the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament	ibid.
And especially of the New	204
The Godhead of each Person	205
Particularly of the Son	206
Who otherwise could not be our Saviour	ibid.
And of the Holy Ghost	ibid.
The order of the Three Persons	208
Why the Father is the first	209
Why the Son is the second	ibid.
Why the Holy Ghost is the third	210
His procession from the Son	211
Inferences from the whole	ibid.
The conclusion	213

On Worldly Riches. Sect. 1.

Why Christians, notwithstanding the excellency of their religion, lead as bad lives as other men	215
This cannot be owing to any defect in the Gospel	216

But proceeds from being too much concerned for the things of this world	217
The love of money is the root of all evil	ibid.
Where by money the apostle means the things of this world	218
In what the love of these things consists	ibid.
How it is the root of all evil	219
Of all the evil of which we are guilty, viz. of sins of omission and commission	ibid. 221
Of all the evil which we suffer in this life	223
And fear in the next	224
Directions for taking off our affections from the things of this world	225

On Worldly Riches. Sect. 2.

Timothy first Bishop of the province of Ephesus	227
He and all ministers enjoined to preach with authority	ibid.
To charge not only the poor, but the rich	231
Whom the apostle means by them that are rich	ibid.
Why they are to be charged not to be high-minded	232
Why not to trust in uncertain riches	233
What good they are enjoined to do	234
Works of piety towards God	235
Works of charity towards the poor	236
And to be rich in good works	237
Which are our principal riches	ibid.
Ready to distribute	238
Willing to communicate	ibid.
The reward promised to this duty	239

On Self-Denial.

The introduction	242
Mistaken notions about Christianity	243
How to know what it is to be a true Christian	244
It is not so easy to be as some imagine	ibid.
They that will be such must deny themselves	ibid.
Deny their reason in matters of divine revelation, which are above it	245
Their wills in submission to God's	246
And their affections	248
And the enjoyment of their estates, when they come in compe- tition with their duty	ibid.
They must deny themselves in those sins and lusts they are used indulge	249
And must renounce their own righteousness	ibid.
Which will not justify, but rather condemn	250
Why we must thus deny ourselves	252
We must also take up the cross	253
Which they only do who suffer for conscience	254
The reasonableness of this duty	255
An exhortation to it	256

On striving to enter at the strait gate.

All must expect ere long to be in another world	253
Either of endless happiness	ibid.
Or of eternal misery	259
Our Saviour's direction in this case	260
The way to misery is broad and easy	ibid.
That to happiness narrow and difficult	ibid.
It implies the forsaking of all sin	262
The performance of many hard duties	263
Yet it is worth striving to obtain it	265
For though hard, yet it is possible	266
We are invited to it by God himself	267
Who affords us all necessary means to obtain it	268
The difficulties will soon be over	ibid.
Heaven will make amends for all	269
In order hereto we must first resolve	ibid.
And then set upon a new life	270
Depending entirely on the merits of Christ	271
Praying for the assistance of his grace	ibid.
And waiting his answer to our prayers	ibid.

On the Imitation of Christ.

Christ came into the world to save sinners	273
Paying, by his death, the debts we owed to God	274
Giving us a pattern of holiness in his life	ibid.
More perfect than any before or since	275
Which we are bound to follow	ibid.
But we must not presume to follow Christ in what he did as God	276
Nor in what he did as God-man	277
But only in what he did as mere man	ibid.
Both in his behaviour towards men	278
In his duty to his parents	ibid.
And to his governors	ibid.
In his meekness towards all men	279
In his bounty and goodness to all, even to his enemies	ibid.
And in his piety towards God	280
Increasing in wisdom as in stature	281
Though as man his knowledge was finite, yet that implies no imperfection or sin	ibid.
Such ignorance is no sin	282
But only the ignorance of what we ought to know	ibid.
At least we should thus increase in godly wisdom, when grown up	ibid.
Teach our children after Christ's example	ibid.
Who, as he grew in godly wisdom when a child, also used that wisdom when grown up, and devoted himself wholly to the service of God	ibid.
His resignation to God's will, love of him, zeal for him, trust in him, were alone most exemplary	284
So were also his external acts of devotion, frequently retiring to pray	ibid.
Frequenting the synagogue on the sabbath	285
An exhortation to follow Christ	286

On our call and election.

Many called but few chosen, a hard saying	287
The Jews rejecting Christ's invitation, the Gentiles are called	286
What is meant by being called	290
We are called from darkness to light	ibid.
From superstition and idolatry to the true worship	291
From sin unto holiness	ibid.
From temporal things to eternal	292
From misery to happiness	ibid.
God hath called some by immediate revelations	292
He calls all by his works and providences	ibid.
But our Saviour means his call by the ministry of his word	ibid.
That many have been and are thus called	295
But few chosen	296
Not absolutely but comparatively few	ibid.
Only such as do God's will	298
No atheistical persons	299
None that are ignorant of the principles of religion	ibid.

On the appearance of Christ the Sun of righteousness.

Why the Scripture represents spiritual things by sensible objects	313
As Christ's coming by the rising of the Sun of righteousness	314
To burn up the wicked	ibid.
But with healing in his wings to such as fear God, that is, to all true believers	315
This Sun is the object only of our faith	ibid.
He gives some light before his rising	316
Christ is often foretold under this emblem	ibid.
Is properly styled the Sun, with respect both to what he is in himself	318
And to what he is to us, the fountain of our light and of our life	319
Who by nature are dead in sin	321
And of all our joy and comfort	322
Of our fruitfulness in good works	323
Which received all their lustre from the reflection of his righteousness, as colours owe their being to the reflection of the sun	324
This Sun of righteousness thus displayed	325
By a lively faith	ibid.
Would have a great influence on the holiness and happiness of our lives	ibid.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPON

RELIGION,

DIGESTED INTO

TWELVE ARTICLES;

WITH

PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS FORMED THEREUPON.

PART I.

By WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

Written in his Younger years, for the settling of his Principles, and
Conduct of his Life.

THE
PREFACE.

AFTER so great a name as that of Bishop BEVERIDGE in the title, it were as superfluous to attempt any farther recommendation of these papers, as it would be impossible to effect it. If any thing can add to the esteem they must every where meet with, upon the account of so great an author, it must be a serious perusal and application of them.

Those that read them with the same spirit of candour, with which this great man always read the works of others, and with the same spirit of piety, with which he wrote his own, will undoubtedly discover in them such a lively idea of the great genius of the author, and so sensibly experience the good influence of them upon their minds, as will more effectually engage their approbation, than the highest encomiums from another hand.

The great misfortune is, that those who have most need to be instructed and reformed, have no true taste or relish for books of this nature: their eyes are dazzled with the glittering appearances of the objects of sense, and their hearts enslaved to the works of darkness; so that the beams of divine light are but troublesome and offensive to them: every point of faith is a contradiction to their principles, and every precept enjoined a reproach to their morals. And, therefore, in order to stave off those self-condemning thoughts, that naturally arise from the serious perusal of such sort of treatises, they scoff at and despise them, as dull and insipid; not worth the consideration of men of more refined parts and deeper penetration, who are too wise to be guided by the rule of God's word, and too obstinate to be persuaded to walk in any other path, but that which the devil has chalked out for them, *the path that leads to destruction.*

But these men would do well to consider, before they are wholly under the power of delusion, that this is not really owing to any flaws or defects in such performances, but to their own reprobate minds and depraved judgments, which tarnish the beauty, cast a mist before the truth, frustrate the influence, and pervert the design of them ; like a vitiated palate, which nauseates the most delicious tastes ; or a foul and disordered stomach, that turns the most wholesome food into poison and corruption. So that they must first divest themselves of their lust and pride, their prejudice and partiality, before they can ever expect to reap any benefit or advantage by this, or any other discourses, that tend to the promoting of piety and religion.

Having thus opened the way to the reading of this book, it may not be improper, in order to set it in its true light, and do justice to the author of it, to say something more particularly concerning both ; and to advertise the reader, that the following sheets were writ by the Bishop in his younger years, upon his first entrance into holy orders. And though they may not, perhaps, be so perfect and correct, as if he himself had lived to give the finishing stroke to them, and fit them for the press with his own hand ; yet, as the roughness of a jewel doth not lessen the worth and value of it, when the brightness of its natural lustre, even under that disadvantage, outshines that of others, which are polished and refined by art ; so, it is to be hoped, the candid and judicious reader will, in this well-designed piece, however unfinished, discover such singular beauties and graces, as few others, even at the highest pitch of their attainments, and with the utmost care and diligence, are able to come up to.

As to the author's design in writing these papers, it is sufficiently set forth in the title of them. He considered, that truth of doctrine, and innocency of life, were both absolutely necessary to the due exercise of the sacred function, which he had the honour and happiness to be admitted into. He knew the power of example to prevail even beyond that of precept, and was very solicitous, with the blessed apostle, to *make his own calling and election sure, lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away.* To the end, therefore, that he might both *save himself, and them that heard him, that both by his life and doctrine, he might set forth the glory of God, and set forward the salvation of men,* he drew up these Articles, to settle his principles in point of faith, and formed these Resolutions upon them, to regulate his actions with regard to practice.

What great things might not the Church promise herself

from a foundation so well laid? from principles settled with so much learning and judgment, and resolutions formed upon such strict rules of piety and religion? What glorious expectations in an age of that degeneracy of faith and manners, wherein he then lived, might not be justly raised from hence, for the future reformation of both?

And, indeed, this excellent person did even more than satisfy all these extraordinary hopes, which the early and ample specimens he gave of his virtue and knowledge had made the world conceive of him. For having taken this prudent and effectual care to ground and determine his own faith and practice; and being ever mindful of that injunction laid upon him, when he was ordained priest, "*To consider the end of his ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ; he never ceased his labour, care, and diligence, until he had done all that in him lay,*" (as our holy Church does most admirably express the duty of that order,) "*to bring all such as were committed to his charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there should be no place left among them for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.*"

While his care of souls was chiefly confined to the bounds of a single parish, with what labour and zeal did he apply himself to the discharge of his ministry, in the several parts and offices of it? How powerful and instructive was he in his discourses from the pulpit? How warm and affectionate in his private exhortations? How orthodox in his doctrine? How regular and uniform in the public worship of the church? In a word, so zealous was he, and heavenly-minded, in all the spiritual exercises of his parochial function, and his labours were so remarkably crowned with blessing and success, that as he himself was justly styled, the great *reviver and restorer of primitive piety*; so his parish was deservedly proposed, as the best model and pattern, for the rest of its neighbours to copy after.

Nor was the Archdeacon, or the Bishop, less vigilant than the Parish-Priest: his care and diligence increased as his power in the church was enlarged; and as he had before discharged the duty of a faithful pastor over his single fold, so when his authority was extended to larger districts, he still pursued the same pious and laborious methods of advancing the honour and interest of religion, by watching over both clergy and laity, and giving them all necessary direction and assistance for the effectual performance of their respective duties.

Accordingly, he was no sooner advanced to the episcopal chair, but in a most pathetic and obliging letter to the clergy of his diocese, he recommended to them "the duty of catechising and instructing the people committed to their charge, in the principles of the Christian religion; to the end they might know what they were to believe, and do, in order to salvation:" and told them, "he thought it necessary to begin with that, without which whatever else he or they should do, would turn to little or no account, as to the main end of the ministry." And to enable them to do this the more effectually, he sent them a plain and easy *Exposition upon the Church Catechism*; of which I need say nothing more, and can say nothing greater, than that it was drawn up by himself in a method, which, in the opinion of so great a judge, seemed, of all others, the most proper to instruct the people.

Thus endeavouring to make himself and others every day wiser and better, labouring to establish sound principles, and settle good manners wherever he came, as it was the foundation which this holy man laid in these Articles and Resolutions; so we see it was the great work of his life to build upon it; as might easily be made appear, from a faithful and particular relation of the several stages and passages of it, during the course of his ministry; the bare enumeration of which would swell this Preface into a book. That fair portrait will, I hope, be drawn by some abler pen.

In the mean time there is yet another instance of his great concern and unwearied endeavours for the establishing of sound doctrine, which I must not omit the mention of; because it is a work of so much affinity with these Articles, and what the reader may, with great advantage, have recourse to, for farther satisfaction upon these general heads of divinity, which he has here given us only in abridgment; it is his learned *Exposition upon the Thirty-nine Articles*, which is promised in a short time to be committed to the press; and which is the more earnestly desired and expected, as being a performance, which the church, at this time, so much wants, and which he, beyond others, was, in such an extraordinary manner, qualified for.

Such discourses as these, the one giving a true exposition of the doctrine of our church, the other endeavouring to establish it by an orthodox faith, and an unspotted life, were never more seasonable than in this age; when the very being of the church is called in question, under a pretence of maintaining her rights; and the principles of Christianity are no longer secretly undermined, but openly attacked; when books are publish-

ed against all revealed religion, and deism insults and triumphs barefaced, without restraint, without reproach. In a word, when we are arrived to that dissoluteness of manners, as well as principles, that persons of the highest quality and station are addressed in print, as patrons of libertinism; and that which has in all ages been called and esteemed the greatest wisdom, is scoffed at by false wit; and Christianity, under the notion of enthusiasm, exposed to the contempt of the meanest capacities, and hooted out of the world by the very dregs of the people.

In so general an inundation of profaneness and licentiousness, Providence seemed indeed to have raised up this great and good man to stand in the gap, and stem the tide against it: but where the torrent is so impetuous, and the forces, that should unite in striving to divert it, so weak and pusillanimous, there is more danger the very opposers should be borne down the stream, than there are hopes of making good the opposition. But, however the doctrine and discipline of our church may be misrepresented, exploded, and despised, and our holy religion become only a name, which is almost every where spoken against; this good Bishop will, nevertheless, have the honour, as he already enjoys the reward, not only of bearing testimony against the growing ill, but of having done all that he could (and who could do more than he?) to restrain and subdue it.

It may, perhaps, be thought a bad omen to our church, to have lost so able a champion, when she seems to stand so much in need of him. But, blessed be God, we have not altogether lost him: he has left us behind him, in these excellent papers, (to say nothing of his sermons, and other incomparable writings,) such clear reasoning, and convincing arguments for the grounding of our principles, and such useful rules and directions for the government of our conversation, that we may yet hope for a happy reformation in both, if we are not wanting to ourselves in the use and application of them.

Would the clergy, the younger sort especially, take this method, upon their first admission into holy orders, (and it ought to be no hard matter to persuade them to it, since it is the very end and design of their ministry,) it could not fail, by the blessing of God, of producing very admirable effects. Their principles thus prudently settled, would stand the shock, even of a fiery trial; and their resolutions thus maturely formed, would undauntedly bear up against the most powerful temptations.

This, if any thing, would raise the dignity of the priesthood

to its first institution, silence all the loud clamours, as well as malicious whispers, that, like echoes, are redoubled and reverberated upon them; and gain them such an interest and reputation among the people, and such an honour and authority in the discharge of their function, that from reverencing the person, and commending the pattern, they would insensibly proceed to the imitation of it; till, by degrees, the flock too, as well as the shepherd, would *become wise to salvation*, would devoutly *sanctify the Lord God in their hearts*; and not only so, but be *ready always to give an answer to every one that should ask them a reason of the hope that is in them*.

And were both clergy and laity thus rightly principled, and firmly resolved, the enemies of our Zion would have both less encouragement to attack, and less power to hurt us; our national church might then despise all the wicked attempts and designs that are daily made and formed against her, and assume to herself that comfortable promise and assurance, that our Saviour himself has given, that even *the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail against her*.

All that I have farther to say, is only to apologize for having said so much, upon a subject that so little needs it; and to close the whole with my hearty prayers to the throne of grace, that this pious and excellent book may meet with that desired effect and success, which the author aimed at in the composing of it, and may be as useful to others, as it was to himself.

THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION.

WHEN in my serious thoughts and more retired meditations I am got into the closet of my heart, and there begin to look within myself, and consider what I am, I presently find myself to be a reasonable creature ; for, was I not so, it would be impossible for me thus to reason and reflect. But, am I a reasonable creature ? Why then I am sure within this veil of flesh there dwells a soul, and that of a higher nature than either plants or brutes are endued with ; for they have souls indeed, but yet they know it not ; and that because their souls or material forms (as the philosophers term them) are not any thing really and essentially distinct from the very matter of their bodies ; which being not capable of a reflexive act, though they are, they know it not, and though they act, they know it not ; it being not possible for them to look within themselves, or to reflect upon their own existences and actions. But it is not so with me ; I not only know I have a soul, but that I have such a soul which can consider of itself, and deliberate of every particular action that issues from it. Nay, I can consider that I am now considering of my own actions, and can reflect upon myself reflecting ; insomuch that had I nothing else to do, I could spin out one reflection upon another to infinity.

And indeed was there never another argument in the world to convince me of the spiritual nature of my soul, this alone would be sufficient to wrest the belief and confession of it from me : for, what below a spirit can thus reflect upon itself ? or, what below a spirit can put forth itself into such actions, as I find I can exercise myself in ? My soul can, in a moment, mount from earth to heaven, fly from pole to pole, and view all the courses and motions of the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars ; and then the next moment, returning to myself again, I

can consider where I have been, what glorious objects have been presented to my view, and wonder at the nimbleness and activity of my soul, that can run over so many millions of miles, and finish so great a work, in so small a space of time. And are such-like acts as these the effects of drossy earth, or impenetrable matter? can any thing below a spirit raise itself so much beyond the reach of material actions?

But stay a little; what is this soul of mine that I am now speaking of, that it is so nimble in its actions, and so spiritual in its nature? Why, it is that which actuates and informs the several organs and members of my body, and enables me not only to perform the natural actions of life and sense, but likewise to understand, consult, argue, and conclude; to will and nill, hope and despair, desire and abhor, joy and grieve, love and hate; to be angry now, and again appeased. It is that by which, at this very time, my head is inditing, my hand is writing, and my heart resolving, what to believe, and how to practise. In a word my soul is myself; and therefore when I speak of my soul, I speak of no other person but myself.

Not as if I totally excluded this earthly substance of my body from being a part of myself; I know it is. But I think it most proper and reasonable to denominate myself from my better part: for, alas! take away my soul, and my body falls, on course, into its primitive corruption, and moulders into the dust, from whence it was first taken. *All flesh is grass*, says the prophet, *and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field*. And this is no metaphorical expression, but a real truth; for what is that which I feed upon, but merely grass, digested into corn, flesh, and the like, which, by a second digestion, is transfused and converted into the substance of my body? And hence it is that my body is but like the grass, or flower of the field, fading, transient, and momentary, to-day flourishing in all its glory, *to-morrow cut down, dried up, and withered*. But now, how far is this beneath the spiritual and incorruptible nature of my immortal soul? which subsists of itself, and can never be dissolved; being not compounded of any earthly or elementary matter, as the body is, but is a pure spiritual substance, infused into me by God, to whom, after a short abode in the body, it is to return, and to live and continue for ever, either in a state of happiness or misery in another life.

But must it so indeed? How much then does it concern me seriously to bethink myself, where I had best to lead this everlasting life, in the heavenly mansions of eternal glory, or else in the dreadful dungeon of infernal misery? But betwixt

these, as there is no medium, so there is no comparison; and, therefore, I shall not put it to the question, which place to choose to live in: but, without giving the other that honour to stand in competition with it, I this morning, with the leave of the most high God, do choose the land of Canaan, the kingdom of heaven, to be the lot of mine inheritance, the only seat of bliss and glory for my soul to rest and dwell in to all eternity.

But heaven, they say, is a place hard to come at; yea, the King of that glorious place hath told me, that *strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to eternal life, and that there be but few that find it*, Matth. vii. 14. yea, and that *many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*, Luke iii. 24. What, therefore, must I do? Why, I must either resolve to make it my whole business to get to heaven, or else I must never hope or expect to come thither. Without any further dispute therefore about it, I resolve at this time, in the presence of Almighty God, that, from this day forward, I will make it my whole business here upon earth to look after my happiness in heaven, and to walk circumspectly in those blessed paths that God hath appointed all to walk in that ever expect to come to him.

Now, though there be but one way, and that a narrow one too, that leads to heaven, yet there are two things requisite to all those that walk in it; and they are, faith and obedience, to believe and to live aright. So that it as much behoves me to have my faith rightly confirmed in the fundamentals of religion, as to have my obedience exactly conformed to the laws of God. And these two duties are so inseparably united, that the former cannot well be supposed without the latter; for I cannot obey what God hath commanded me, unless I first believe what he hath taught me. And they are both equally difficult, as they are necessary: indeed, of the two, I think it is harder to lay the sure foundation of faith, than to build the superstructure of obedience upon it; for it seems next to impossible for one that believes every truth, not to obey every command, that is written in the word of God. But it is not so easy a thing as it is commonly thought to believe the word of God, and to be firmly established in the necessary points of religion; especially in these wicked times wherein we live; in which there are so many pernicious errors and damnable heresies crept into the articles of some men's faith, as do not only shock the foundation of the church of Christ, but strike at the root of all religion. The first thing, therefore, that, by the grace of God, I am resolved to do, in re-

ference to my everlasting estate, is, to see my faith, that it be both rightly placed, and firmly fixed, that I may not be as a *wave tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive*; but that I may be thoroughly settled in my faith and judgment concerning those things, the knowledge of, and assent unto which, is absolutely necessary to my future happiness. Let therefore what times soever come upon me; let what temptations soever be thrown before me; I am resolved, by the grace of God, stedfastly to believe as followeth.

ARTICLE I.

I believe there is one God, the Being of all beings.

THE other articles of my faith I think to be true, because they are so; this is true, because I think it so: for if there was no God, and so this article not true, I could not be, and so not think it true. But in that I think, I am sure I am; and in that I am, I am sure there is a God; for if there was no God, how came I to be? How came I hither? Who gave me my being? Myself? that could not be; for before I had a being, I was nothing; and therefore could do nothing, much less make myself a being. Did my parents give me my being? Alas! they knew not that I should be, before I was; and therefore, certainly, could not give me my being, when I was not.

As to my soul, (which I call myself,) it is plain they could not give me that, because it is a being of a spiritual nature, quite distinct from matter, (as my own experience tells me,) and therefore could not be the product of any natural or material agent: for that a bodily substance should give being to a spiritual one, implies a contradiction. And if it could neither make itself, nor take its rise from any earthly or secondary cause, I may certainly conclude, from my own reason, as well as from divine revelation, that it must be infused by God, though I am not able to determine either when, or how, it was done.

As to my body; indeed I must own it was derived from my parents, who were immediately concerned in bringing the materials of it together: but then, who made up these coarse materials into the form or figure of a body? Was this the effect of natural generation? But how came my parents by this generative power? Did they derive it, by succession,

from our first parents in Paradise? Be it so. But whence came they? Did they spring out of the earth? No. What then? Were they made by chance? This could not be; for as chance seldom or never produces any one effect that is regular and uniform, so it cannot be supposed that a being of such admirable beauty, symmetry, and proportion, and such a nice contexture of parts, as the body of man is, should ever be jumbled together by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, which nothing but the chimeras of Epicurus could ever reduce into a regular form and composition.

And the like may be said of all other created beings in the world. For there is no natural cause can give being to any thing, unless it has that being it gives in itself; for it is a received maxim in philosophy, that no thing can give what it has not. And so, however the bodies of men, or brutes, or plants, may now, in the ordinary course of nature, be produced by generation, yet there must needs be some one supreme almighty Being in the world, that has the being of all other beings in itself; who first created these several species, and endowed them with this generative power to propagate their kind. And this supreme Being is that which we call God.

Hence it is that there is not a leaf, no not a line, in this great book of the creation, wherein we may not clearly read the existence and perfections of the great and glorious Creator, and that even by the glimmering light of nature. For, who is it that bedecked yonder stately canopy of heaven with those glistering spangles, the stars? Who is it that commands the sun to run his course, and the moon to ride her circuit so constantly about the world? Who is it that formed me so curiously in my mother's womb? Who is it that gives my stomach power to digest such variety of meats into chyle, and my heart or liver to turn them all to blood, and thence to send each particle to its proper place, and all to keep up this crazy carcase? Doubtless, these and such-like things, however ordinary or natural they may appear to us at present, are in themselves very great and wonderful effects, that must, at first, be produced by some infinitely powerful and supernatural agent, the high and mighty God, who is not only the chiefest of beings, but the Being of all beings whatsoever.

I say, the Being of all beings, because whatsoever excellency or perfection is in any other thing, is eminently, yea, infinitely comprehended in him; so that he is not only the creature's perfection in the concrete, but in the abstract too; he is not only all-wise, all-good, all-mighty, &c. but he

is all-wisdom, all-goodness, all-might, all-mercy, all-justice, all-glory, &c. And as he is the ocean and abyss of all these perfections in himself, so is he the fountain of them all to us ; insomuch that we have nothing, not so much as the least moment of life, but what is communicated to us from this ever-living God. And not only what we, poor sinful worms, are, or have, but even whatsoever those nobler creatures the angels have, it is but a beam darted from this sun, it is but a stream flowing from this overflowing fountain.

Lift up thine eyes, therefore, O my soul, and fix them a little upon this glorious object ! How glorious, how transcendently glorious, must he needs be, who is the Being of all beings, the perfection of all perfections, the very glory of all glories, the eternal God ! He is the glory of love and goodness, who is good, and doth good continually unto me, though I be evil, and do evil continually against him. He is the glory of wisdom and knowledge, unto whom all the secret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my soul are exactly known and manifest. Never did a thought lurk so secretly in my heart, but that his all-seeing eye could espy it out : even at this time, he knows what I am now thinking of, and what I am doing, as well as myself. And indeed, well may he know what I think, and speak, and do, when I can neither think, nor speak, nor do any thing, unless himself be pleased to give me strength to do it. He is the glory of might and power, who did but speak the word, and there presently went out that commanding power from him, by which this stately fabric of the world was formed and fashioned. And as he created all things by the word of his power, so I believe he preserves and governs all things by the power of the same word : yea, so great is his power and sovereignty, that he can as easily frown my soul from my body into hell, or nothing, as I can throw this book out of my hand to the ground : nay, he need not throw me into nothing ; but as, if I should let go my hold, the book would presently fall ; so, should God but take away his supporting hand from under me, I should of myself immediately fall down to nothing. 'This therefore is that God, whom I believe to be the Being of all beings ; and so the Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Disposer of all things in the world.

ARTICLE II.

I believe that whatsoever the most high God would have me to believe or do, in order to his glory and my happiness, he hath revealed to me in his holy Scriptures.

UPON the same account that I believe there is a God, I believe likewise that this God is to be worshipped; the same light that discovers the one, discovering the other too. And therefore it is, that as there is no nation or people in the world but acknowledge some deity; so there is none but worship that deity which they acknowledge; yea, though it be but a stick or a stone, yet if they fancy any thing of divinity in it, they presently perform worship and homage to it. Nay, that God is to be worshipped, is a truth more generally acknowledged than that there is a God. No nation, I confess, ever denied the latter, but no particular person ever denied the former: so that the very persons who, through diabolical delusions, and their own prevalent corruptions, have suspected the existence of a Deity, could not but acknowledge that he was to be worshipped if he did exist; worship being that which is contained in the very notion of a Deity; which is, that he is the Being of all beings, upon whom all other things or beings do depend, and unto whom they are beholden, both for their essence and subsistence. And if there be such a Being that is the spring and fountain of all other Beings, it is necessary that all other should reverence and worship him, without whom they could not subsist. And therefore it is, that men are generally more superstitious in their worshipping than they ought to be, rather than deny that worship to him which they ought to give.

That therefore there is a God, and that this God is to be worshipped, I do not doubt; but the great question is, who is this God whom I ought to worship? and, what is that worship which I ought to perform unto him? The former I have resolved upon in the foregoing article, as the light of reason and my natural conscience suggested to me; the latter I am resolved to search out in this, viz. which of all the several kinds of worship that men perform to the Deity, and the several religions that men profess in the world, I had best make choice of to profess and adhere to. The general inclinations which are naturally implanted in my soul to some religion it is impossible for me to shift off; but there being such a multiplicity of religions in the world, I desire now seriously to con-

sider with myself, which of them all to restrain these my general inclinations to.

And the reason of this my inquiry is not that I am in the least dissatisfied with that religion I have already embraced, but because it is natural for all men to have an overbearing opinion and esteem for that particular religion they are born and bred up in. That therefore I may not seem biassed by the prejudice of education, I am resolved to prove and examine them all, that I may see and hold fast to that which is best. For though I do not in the least question but that I shall, upon inquiry, find the Christian religion to be the only true religion in the world, yet I cannot say it is, unless I find it, upon good grounds, to be so indeed. For, to profess myself a Christian, and believe that Christians are only in the right, because my forefathers were so, is no more than the Heathens and Mahometans have to say for themselves.

Indeed, there was never any religion so barbarous and diabolical, but it was preferred before all other religions whatsoever by them that did profess it; otherwise they would not have professed it. The Indians, that worship the Devil, would think it as strange doctrine to say that Christ is to be feared more than the Devil, as such as believe in Christ think it is to say the Devil is to be preferred before Christ. So do the Mahometans call all that do not believe in Mahomet, as well as Christians call those that believe not in Christ, infidels. And why, say they, may not you be mistaken as well as we? especially, when there is at the least six to one against your Christian religion; all of which think they serve God aright, and expect happiness thereby, as well as you. So that to be a Christian only upon the grounds of birth or education, is all one as if I was a Turk or a Heathen; for if I had been born amongst them, I should have had the same reason for their religion as now I have for my own: the premises are the same, though the conclusion be never so different. It is still upon the same grounds that I profess religion, though it be another religion which I profess upon these grounds; so that I can see but very little difference betwixt being a Turk by profession, and a Christian only by education; which commonly is the means and occasion, but ought by no means to be the ground of any religion.

And hence it is, that in my looking out for the truest religion, being conscious to myself how great an ascendant Christianity hath over me beyond the rest, as being that religion whereinto I was born and baptized; that which the supreme authority has enjoined, and my parents educated me in; that which every one I meet withal highly approves of, and which I myself

have, by a long continued profession, made almost natural to me; I am resolved to be more jealous and suspicious of this religion than of the rest, and be sure not to entertain it any longer, without being convinced, by solid and substantial arguments, of the truth and certainty of it.

That therefore I may make diligent and impartial inquiry into all religions, and so be sure to find out the best, I shall for a time lock upon myself as one not at all interested in any particular religion whatsoever, much less in the Christian religion; but only as one who desires in general to serve and obey him that made me in a right manner, and thereby to be made partaker of that happiness my nature is capable of. In order to this, it will be necessary to propose to myself some certain marks or characters, whereby I may be able to judge and make choice of the religion I intend to embrace: and they are in general these two, viz.

First, That is the best religion wherein God is worshipped and served most like himself, i. e. most suitably and conformably to his nature and will. And,

Secondly, Since all men naturally desire and aspire after happiness, and our greatest happiness consists in the fruition of God, that is certainly the best religion which gives me the best and most comfortable assurances of being happy with God to all eternity.

To embrace a religion without these marks would be worse than to have no religion at all; for better it is to perform no worship to God, than such as is displeasing to him; to do him no service, than such as will be ineffectual to make me happy, and not only frustrate my expectations of bliss, but make me forever miserable.

The religion then that I am to look after must be such a one wherein I may be sure to please God, and to be made happy with him, and, by consequence, such a one wherein all the cause of his displeasure and my misery may be removed; and that is sin: for sin being infinitely opposite to him, as he is a Being of infinite purity and holiness, must certainly set me at the greatest distance from him, and render me most odious in his sight; and whatsoever does so must make me as miserable as misery can make me. For, as our holiness consisteth in likeness, so doth our happiness in nearness to God: and if it be our happiness to be near unto him, it must certainly be our misery to be at a distance from him. In enjoying him we enjoy all things, he being and having all things in himself; and so in not enjoying him, we are not only deprived of all that we can enjoy, but made liable to the punishments that are the consequence of it.

That there is no such thing in nature as virtue and vice, as good and evil, as grace and sin, is what I can by no means persuade myself to; for my conscience tells me that there is: and not only mine, but every one that ever yet lived upon the face of the earth; all people, of whatsoever nation or language, still acknowledging sin to be sin, and that the displeasing the deity which they worship is indeed an evil that ought to be carefully avoided. And therefore the very Heathens did not only upbraid others with it, but likewise often checked themselves for it: and all men naturally desire to seem, though not to be, holy. But let others say what they will, I for my own part cannot but see sin in myself by the very light of nature. For my reason tells me that if God be God, he must be just and perfect; and if I be not so too, I am not like him, and therefore must needs displease him; it being impossible any thing should please him but what is like unto him. And this difformity to the will and nature of God is that which we call sin, or which the word sin, in its proper notion, brings into my mind.

And being thus conscious to myself that I have sinned against my Maker, I may reasonably conclude, that as he is omniscient, and, by consequence, a witness of these my offences, so must he likewise be just in the punishment of them; for it cannot stand with his justice to put up with such offences, without laying suitable punishments upon the offender. And these punishments must be infinite and eternal; for wherein doth the nature of divine justice consist, but in giving to sin its just punishments, as well as to virtue its due rewards? Now that the punishment of sin in this world is not so much as it deserves, nor, by consequence, as much as, in justice, ought to be laid upon it, to me is clear, in that every sin being committed against an infinite God, deserves infinite punishment; whereas all the punishments we suffer in this world cannot be any more than finite, the world itself being no more than finite that we suffer them in.

Upon these grounds, therefore, it is that I am fully satisfied in my conscience that I am a sinner; that it cannot stand with the justice nor the existence of God that made me to pardon my sins, without satisfaction made to his divine justice for them; and yet, that unless they be pardoned, it is impossible for me to be happy here or hereafter. And therefore must I look after some religion, wherein I may be sure my sins may be thus pardoned, and my soul made happy; wherein I may please God, and God may bless me. Which that I may be the better able to discover, I shall take a brief survey of all

the religions I ever heard of, or believe to be in the world.

Now, though there be as many kinds of religions as nations, yea, almost as particular persons in the world, yet may they all be reduced to these four; the Paganish, Mahometan, Jewish, and Christian religion.

As to the first it is indeed of a very large extent, and comprehends under it all such as neither acknowledge Mahomet to be a prophet, nor expect a promised Messiah, nor believe in a crucified Jesus: and since it is the majority of numbers that usually carries the vogue, let me see whether the Paganish religion, being farther extended, and more generally professed than any, or indeed all the rest, be not the true religion, wherein God is most rightly worshipped, and I may be the most certainly saved. And here, when I take a view of this religion, as it is dispersed through several parts of Asia, Africa and America, I find them very devout in worshipping their deities, such as they are, and they have great numbers of them: some worship the sun, others the moon and stars, others the earth and other elements, serpents, trees, and the like. And others again pay homage and adoration to images and statues, in the fashion of men and women, hogs, horses, and other shapes; and some to the Devil himself, as in Pegu, &c.

But now, to go no farther, this seems to me at first sight to be a very strange and absurd sort of religion; or rather it is quite the reverse of it. For the true notion we have of religion is the worshipping the true God in a true manner: and this is the worshipping false gods in a false manner. For I cannot entertain any other notion of God, than as one supreme Almighty Being, who made and governs all things, and who, as he is a Spirit, ought to be worshipped in a spiritual manner. And therefore, as the very supposing more deities than one implies a contradiction, so the paying divine homage in a gross carnal manner to material and corporeal beings, which are either the work of men's hands, or at best but creatures like ourselves, which can neither hear nor understand what we say to them, much less give us what we desire of them, is not religion, but idolatry and superstition, or rather madness and delusion. So that this religion, I see, if I should embrace it, would be so far from making me happy, that the more zealous I should be for it, the more miserable I should be by it. For, he that made these things cannot but be very angry at me, if I should give that worship to them which is only due to himself; and so the way whereby I expect my sins should be pardoned, they would be more increased; it being a sin against the very light of nature to prefer any thing before God, or to worship

any thing in his stead : therefore, leaving these to their superstitions idolatries and diabolical delusions, I must go and seek for the true religion somewhere else.

The next religion that hath the most suffrages and votes on its side is the Mahometan religion, so called from one Mahomet, an Arabian, who about a thousand years ago, by the assistance of one Sergius, a Nestorian monk, compiled a book in the Arabian tongue, which he called Alcoran, which he made the rule of his followers' faith and manners, pretending that it was sent from heaven to him by the hand of the angel Gabriel.

This book I have perused, and must confess find many things in it agreeable to right reason ; as, that there is but one God, gracious, and merciful, the Lord of the whole universe ; that this God we are to resign ourselves wholly to ; that all that obey him shall be certainly rewarded, and all that disobey him as certainly punished ; and the like. But yet I dare not venture my soul upon it, nor become one of the professors of it ; because, as there are many things consonant, so are there many things dissonant, to the natural light that is implanted in me ; as, that God should swear by figs and olives, by mount Sinai, as this book makes him to do, in the chapter of the *Figs* ; that Solomon should have an army composed of men, and devils, and birds ; and that he should discourse with a bird, which acquainted him with the affairs of the queen of Sheba, and the like.

As to the argument, whereby he would persuade us that this book was sent from God, viz. that there are no contradictions in it, I take it to be very false and frivolous ; for, besides that that there are many books compiled by men which have no contradictions in them, it is certain there are a great many plain contradictions in this book, which overthrow his supposition. Thus, in the chapter of the *Table*, he saith, that “ all that believe in God, and the resurrection of the dead, and have done good works, shall be saved ;” but, in the chapter of *Gratification*, he saith, “ all that do not believe in the Alcoran shall be destroyed ;” and so in the chapter of *Hod*. In like manner, he tells us again, in the chapter of the *Table*, that the books of the old and New Testament were sent from God, and at the same time supposes, that the Alcoran was sent from him too ; which to me seems impossible : for my reason tells me, that God, who is truth and wisdom itself, cannot be guilty of falsehood or contradiction. And if these books contradict one another, as it is evident they do in many instances, it is plain God could not be the author of both ; and, by conse-

quence, if the Scripture be true, the Alcoran must of necessity be false. To instance but in one particular, the Alcoran says, in the chapter of *Women*, "God hath no Son;" the Scripture, in Matt. iii. 17. God said of Jesus, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*: and, Heb. iv. 14. it expressly calls that Jesus the *Son of God*; and so in many other things. Now it is impossible that both these should be true, or, by consequence, that that should be true which says both are so.

But if this were granted, there is still another objection against this religion; and that is, that the rewards therein promised will not avail to make me happy, though I should be partaker of them. For, all the promises made to us in this paradise are but mere sensible pleasures; as, that we shall have all manner of herbs, and fruits, and drinks, and women with exceeding great and black eyes, as in the chapter of the *Merciful*, and of *Judgment*, and elsewhere; and such pleasures as these, though they may indeed affect my body, yet they cannot be the happiness of my soul. Indeed, I know not how this book should promise any higher happiness than that of the body, because it shows no means of attaining to it; it shews no way how my sins may be pardoned, and so my soul made happy. It saith, I confess, that God, is gracious and merciful, and therefore will pardon them; but my reason tells me, that as God is gracious and merciful, and therefore will pardon sin, so he is also just and righteous, and therefore must punish it. And how these two can stand together, is not manifested in the Alcoran; and therefore I dare not trust my soul with it.

Thus, upon diligent search, have I found the two religions, that are most generally professed, to have little or nothing of religion in them. I shall therefore in the next place take a view of that religion which hath the fewest followers, and that is the Jewish. A religion, not established by any human laws, nor, indeed, generally professed in any nation, but, only by a company of despicable people, scattered up and down the world, which, as the prophet expresses it, *are become a proverb of reproach, and a by-word among all nations whither they are driven*. The principles of this religion are contained in a book written in the Hebrew tongue, which they call the *Torah* or *Law*, composed of several precepts, promises, and threatenings; together with histories of things past, and prophecies of things to come: this book, they say, was written by men inspired by God himself: and therefore

they avouch it not to be of a human invention, but merely of divine institution.

This book also I have diligently read and examined into, and must ingenuously confess, that, at the very first glance, methought I read divinity in it, and could not but conclude, from the majesty of its style, the purity of its precepts, the harmony of its parts, the certainty of its promises, and the excellency of its rewards, that it could be derived from no other author but God himself. It is here only that I find my Maker worshipped under the proper notion of a Deity, as he is *Jehovah*, and in the right manner: for we are here commanded to *love and serve him with all our hearts, with all our souls, our might and mind*. Deut. iv. 5. chap. x. 12. which is, indeed, the perfection of all true worship whatsoever. And as God is here worshipped aright, so is the happiness which is here entailed upon this true worship, the highest that is possible a creature should be made capable of, being nothing less than the enjoyment of him we worship, so as to have him to be a God to us, and ourselves to be a people to him, Jer. xxxi. 33.

But that which I look upon still as the surest character of the true religion is, its holding forth the way how I, being a sinner, can be invested with this happiness: or how God can shew his justice in punishing sin in itself, and yet be so merciful as to pardon and remit it to me, and so receive me to his favour: which the religions I viewed before did not so much as pretend to, nor offer at all at. And this is what this book of the Law does likewise discover to me, by shewing that God Almighty would not visit our sins upon ourselves, but upon another person; that he would appoint and ordain one to be our Sponsor or Mediator, who, by his infinite merit, should bear and atone for our iniquities, and so shew his love and mercy in justifying and acquitting us from our sins, at the same time that he manifests his justice in inflicting the punishment of them upon this person in our stead. A method so deep and mysterious, that if God himself had not revealed it, I am confident no mortal man could ever have discovered or thought of it!

Neither are there any doubts and scruples concerning this great mystery, but what this book does clearly answer and resolve; as will appear more plainly from a distinct consideration of the several objections that are urged against it.

As, 1. *That it does not seem agreeable either to reason or Scripture, that one man should bear the sins of another: because every man has enough to do to bear his own burden: and*

since sin is committed against an infinite God, and therefore deserves infinite punishment, how can any finite creature bear this infinite punishment; especially, it being due to so many thousands of people as there are in the world!

But this book sufficiently unties this knot for me, by shewing me, that it is not a mere man, but God himself, that would bear these my sins; even he, whose name is *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. where the essential name of the most high God, which cannot possibly be given to any but to him who is the Being of all beings, is here given to him, who should thus bear my sins, and justify my person; whence David also calleth him *Lord*, Psal. cx. 1. Isaiah calleth him, *The mighty God*, Isa. ix. 6. yea, and the Lord of Hosts himself, with his own mouth, calls him his *fellow*, Zech. xiii. 7,

Obj. 2. *But my reason tells me God is a pure act, and therefore how can he suffer any punishments? or, suppose he could, how can one nature satisfy for the offences of another? It was man that stood guilty; and how can it stand with the justice of God not to punish man for the sins he is guilty of?*

To resolve this doubt, this holy book assures me that this God should become man, expressly telling me, that as his name is *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*, so should he be born a child, and given us a son, Isa. ix. 6. And therefore at the same time that the Lord of Hosts calls him his *fellow*, he calls him a *man* too, *against the man that is my fellow*, says the Lord of Hosts, Zech. xiii. 7.

Obj. 3. *But if he be born as other men are, he must needs be a sinner as other men be; for such as are born by natural generation, must necessarily be born also in natural corruption.*

To remove this obstacle, this holy book tells me, that *a virgin shall conceive, and bear this Son, and his name shall be Immanuel*, Isa. vii. 14. And so being begotten, but not by a sinful man, himself shall be a man, but not a sinful man: and so being God and man, he is every way fit to mediate betwixt God and man, to reconcile God to me, and me to God, that my sins may be pardoned, God's wrath appeased, and so my soul made happy in the enjoyment of him.

But there is one thing more yet that keeps me from settling upon this religion; and that is, the expiration of the time in which this book promiseth this person should come into the world; for it is expressly said, Dan. ix. 24. *that seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy city, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make recon-*

ciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. From which anointing, he is, in the next verse, called *Messiah*, the *Anointed*, (under which name he is, from hence, expected by the Jews;) and the beginning of these seventy weeks is expressly said, ver. 25. to be *at the going forth of the commandment to build and restore Jerusalem*. Now if we understand these seventy weeks in the largest sense, for seventy weeks or *sabbaths of years*, as it is expressed, Lev. xxv. 8. the time of the Messiah's coming must have been but 490 years after the commandment for the building of the city; whereas, whether we understand it of the decree and command that Cyrus made, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23. Ezra i. 1, 2, 3. or that which Darius made, Ezra vi. or that Artaxerxes made, chap. vii. I say, whichsoever of these decrees we understand this prophecy of, it is evident that it is above 2000 years since they were all made; and therefore the time of this person's coming hath been expired above 1600 years at least.

So likewise doth this book of the law (as they call it) assure us, that the *sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*, Gen. xlix. 10, where the Jews themselves, Jonathan and Onkelos, expound the word *Shiloh*, by *Messiah*; and so doth the Jerusalem Targum too. Now it is plain, that there hath been neither sceptre nor lawgiver in Judah, nor any political government at all among the Jews, for above 1600 years; which plainly shews, either that their prophecies and expectations of a Messiah are false, or that he came into the world so many ages since, as were here prefixed.

So likewise it was expressly foretold in this book, that *the glory of the second temple should be greater than the glory of the former*, Hag. ii. 9. Now the Jews themselves acknowledge, that there were five of the principal things which were in the first, wanting in the second temple, viz. 1. The Ark, with the Mercy-Seat and Cherubim. 2. The *Schechinah*, or Divine Presence. 3. The Holy Prophetical Spirit. 4. The Urim and Thummim. 5. The Heavenly Fire: and from the want of these five things, they say, the word אכבר, *I will be glorified*, Hag. i. 8. wants an ה at the end, which in numeration denotes five. Yea, and when the very foundation of the second temple was laid, the old men that had seen the first, wept to see how far short it was likely to come of the former, Ezra iii. 12. To make up therefore the glory of the second temple to be greater than the glory of the first, notwithstand-

ing the want of so many glorious things, they must of necessity understand it of the coming of the Messiah into it, who, ver. 3. is called, *The Desire of all nations*. Whereas the Jews themselves cannot but confess that this temple hath been demolished above 1600 years; and therefore it is impossible for the Messiah to come into it, and so for its glory to be greater than the glory of the first temple; and, by consequence, for the word which they profess to believe in to be true.

Indeed, the time of the Messiah's coming was so expressly set down in these and the like places, that Elias, one of their great rabbies, gathered from hence, that the world should last 6000 years, 2000 without the law, 2000 under the law, and 2000 under the Messiah, Sanh. c. 11. which computation of the Messiah's coming, after 4000 years, from the beginning of the world, comes near the time of the sceptre's departing from Judah, and the end of Daniel's seventy weeks; which shows, that this rabbi was fully convinced that it was about that time that the Messiah should come. And therefore it was, likewise, that about 1600 years ago, the Jews did so generally expect his coming, and that so many did pretend to be the person; as Bar-Cozbah, who, about that time, venting himself to be the man, almost the whole nation unanimously concurred in following him; insomuch that, as the Jews report, there were no less than 400,000, or, as others, 500,000 men slain by Adrian the Emperor, in the city Bitter, all fighting in defence of this pretended Messiah. There were likewise many others that fancied themselves to be the man, and were esteemed so by some, till manifestly convinced of their error, as we may read in a book of theirs, called *שכס יהורה*. And unto this day many of them hold that he is already come, but that, by reason of their sins, he is not yet revealed to them.

Hence it is that my natural reason draws me into this dilemma, that either that book which the Jews receive as the word of God is indeed not so, or else that they do not rightly apply it; and so, that either their religion is a false religion, or else their profession of it is a false profession: and therefore I must go hence, and seek me some other religion to fix my soul upon. Not as if my reason told me, that all the prophecies that I have mentioned here were false in themselves, but only that they appear so to this sort of professors; for, for my own part, I cannot shake off my faith in this law, which they profess to believe in; especially now I have so seriously perused it, and so deliberately weighed and considered of it. Neither can I believe, that ever any Mahometan or Indian that did, without prejudice, set himself to read it through, and to examine every

particular by the light of unbiassed reason, could say it was ever hatched in a human brain ; but that it is indeed of a heavenly stamp, and divine authority. And therefore, though I am forced by the strength of reason to shake hands with this religion, yet the same reason will not suffer me to lay aside that law which they do profess, but only their profession of it. So that whatsoever religion I settle upon, my natural conscience still commands me to stick close to this book of the Jewish law, and to receive and entertain it as the word of the glorious Jehovah, the Being of all beings.

Well, there is but one religion more, generally professed in the world, that I am to search into ; which if upon good grounds I cannot fix upon, I shall be the most miserable of all creatures ; and that is, the Christian religion, so named from Jesus Christ, whose doctrine, life, and death, is recorded by four several persons, in a book which they call the Gospel : and this book appears to me to be of undoubted authority, as to the truth and certainty of those things that are therein recorded. For, if they had been false, both the persons that wrote them, and he of whom they wrote, had so many malicious enemies ready, upon all occasions, to accuse them, that they had been long ago condemned for lies and forgeries. But now, these writings having been extant for above 1600 years, and never so much as suspected, but even by the worst of enemies acknowledged to be a true relation of what passed in the world about that time ; my reason will not permit me to be their first accuser, but enjoins me to receive them under that notion, in which they have been brought down to me through so many generations, without any interruption whatsoever. For this general reception on all hands is a sufficient ground for me to build my faith upon as to the truth of the relation, though not a sufficient ground to believe every thing contained in the book to be the word of God himself : for, in this particular, it is not the testimony of others that I am to build upon, but its own : I may read its verity in man's testimony, but its divinity only in its own doctrines.

This book, therefore, I have also diligently perused, and find it expressly asserts, that Jesus Christ, whose life and death it records, was indeed that person who was long ago promised by God, and expected by the Jews : and that all the prophecies under the old law concerning that Messiah, God-Man, were actually fulfilled in this person ; which if, upon diligent search, I can find to be true, I shall presently subscribe, both with hand and heart, to this religion. It is a comfort to me, that it acknowledgeth the Jewish law to be sent from God ;

for truly, if it did not, my conscience would scarce permit me to give any credit to it; being so fully convinced that that book is indeed of a higher extract than human invention, and of greater authority than human institution. And therefore it is that I cannot, I dare not believe, but that every particular prophecy contained in it either is, or shall be, certainly fulfilled, according to every circumstance of time and place mentioned therein; and, by consequence, that this prophecy in particular, concerning the Messiah's coming, is already past the time wherein it was foretold he should come, being so long ago expired. So that I do not now doubt whether the Messiah be come or no, but whether this Jesus Christ, whom this book of the Gospel speaks of, was indeed the person. And this I shall best find out, by comparing the Christian's Gospel with the Jewish Law; or the histories of Christ under the one, with the prophecies of the Messiah under the other; still concluding, that if whatsoever was foretold concerning the Messiah was fulfilled in this Jesus Christ, then he was indeed the Messiah that was to come into the world. And, to make this comparison the more exact, I shall run through the several circumstances that attended his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and show how punctually the prophecies were fulfilled in every particular.

And first, for the birth of the Messiah, the Law saith, he was to be *born of the seed of Abraham*, Gen. xxii. 18. and *David*, 2 Sam. vii. 12. and of *the stem of Jesse*, Isa. xi. 1. From whence he is frequently called by the Jews, *The Son of David*. The Gospel saith, *Jesus Christ was the son of David, the son of Abraham*, Matt. i. 2. The Law, that he was to be *born of a virgin*, Isa. vii. 14. The Gospel, that *Mary, a virgin, brought forth this Jesus*, Matt. i. 18. Luke, i. 17, 31. 35. chap. ii. 5, 6, 7. The Law, that he was to be *born at Bethlehem Ephrata*, Mic. v. 2. The Gospel, that this Jesus was born there, Matt. ii. 1. Luke iv. 5. 6.

The Law says, that he was to be *brought out of Egypt*, Hos. xi. 1. The Gospel, that Jesus was *called thence*, Matt. ii. 19, 20. The Law saith, that *one should go before the Messiah*, Mal. iii. 5. and should *cry in the wilderness*, Isa. xl. 3. The Gospel, that John Baptist did so before Christ, Matt. iii. 1, 3. Mark i. 2, 3. The Law, that the Messiah should *preach the doctrine of salvation in Galilee*, who, sitting before in darkness, should see great light, Isa. ix. 1, 2. The Gospel, that Jesus did so, Matt. iv. 12, 23. The Law, that in the Messiah's days, the *eyes of the blind should be opened*, and the *ears of the deaf should be unstopped*, and the *lame leap*, and the *tongue*

of the dumb sing, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. The Gospel, that it was so in the days of Jesus Christ, Matt. iv. 23. chap. xi. 5. But for all these wonders and miracles, the Law saith, they *should hear, but not understand; and see, yet not perceive*, Isa. vi. 9. and the Gospel, that *seeing they did not see, and hearing they did not hear, neither did they understand*, Mat. xiii. 13. Mark iv. 12. The Law, that he should be *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, Isa. liii. 3. The Gospel, that Jesus Christ *had no where to lay his head*, Matt. viii. 20. *His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death*, Matt. xxvi. 38. yea, he was in *an agony*, and his *sweat was as drops of blood*, Luke xxii. 24. so well was he acquainted with grief. The Law says, that he should *ride into Jerusalem upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass*, Zech. ix. 9. And the Gospel, that Jesus Christ, *as he was going to Jerusalem, having found an ass, sate thereon*, John xii. 14. Matt. xxi. 6. At which time, the Law saith, the people should cry, *Hosannah, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, Psal. cxviii. 26. The Gospel, that the multitude did so to Christ, Matt. xxi. 9. The Law, that *one of his own familiar friends, in whom he trusted, which did eat of his bread, should lift up his heel against him*, Psalm xli. 9. The Gospel, that Judas, who was one of Christ's disciples, and so ate of his bread, did betray him into the hands of the Jews, Matt. xxvi. 47. Luke xxii. 46. The Law, that he should be *prized at, and sold for, thirty pieces of silver*, with which should be *bought the potter's field*, Zech. xi. 12, 13. The Gospel, that they covenanted with Judas to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, Matt. xxvi. 15. with which they afterwards *bought the potters' field*, chap. xxvii. 7. The Law, that he *should be numbered amongst transgressors*, Isa. liii. 12. The Gospel, that Jesus was *crucified betwixt two thieves*, Mark xv. 27. Matt. xxvii. 38. The Law, that he *should be wounded and bruised*, Isa. liii. 5. The Gospel, that *they scourged Jesus*, Matt. xxvii. 20. and *smote him*, Mark xv. 19. The Law saith, they should *pierce his hands and feet*, Psal. xxii. 16. Zech. xii. 10. The Gospel, that *they crucified Jesus*, Matt. xxvii. 35. Luke xxiii. which was a death, wherein they used to pierce the hands and feet of those that were put to death, and nailed them to the cross. But though they should pierce his flesh, yet the Law saith, they should not *break his bones, no not one of them*, Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12. Psal. xxxiv. 20. The Gospel, that they *brake not the legs of Christ*, John xix. 33, 36. The Law, that they that should *see him should laugh him to scorn, shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted*

in the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him, Psal. xxii. 8. The Gospel, that the Scribes and Elders did so to Christ, Matt. xxvii. 42, 43. The Law saith, they should *give him gall for meat, and vinegar to drink*, Psal. lxxix. 21. And the Gospel, that they gave Christ *vinegar to drink, mingled with gall*, Matt. xxvii. 34, 48. The Law, that they should *part his garments amongst them, and cast lots upon his vesture*, Psal. xxii. 19. The Gospel, that they *parted Jesus's garments, casting lots*, Matt. xxvii. 35. John xix. 23. Mark xv. 24.

And as for the time of this Jesus's coming into the world, it is certain that this Jesus came before the second temple was demolished; for it is said, that he *went into it*, Matth. xix. 45. yea, himself *taught daily in it*, ver. 47, by which means the *glory of the second temple was greater than the glory of the first*, according to the prophecy, Hag. ii. 9. And as for Jacob's prophecy, that the *sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver, till Shiloh*, or the Messiah, *come*, Gen. xlix. 10. it is certain that it did not depart from Judah, till Herod, by the senate of Rome, was made king of Judea, in whose days this Jesus was born, Matt. ii. 1. Luke i. 6. And so did Daniel's 70 weeks, or 490 years, exactly reach unto, and were determined in, the days of this Jesus, as might easily be demonstrated. So that all the old prophecies, concerning the time of the Messiah's coming, are perfectly fulfilled in this Jesus of Nazareth.

But farther, the Law saith, that though the Messiah should be crucified, yet God would not *leave his soul in hell, nor suffer his Holy One to see corruption*, Psal. xvi. 10. and that, *when God should make his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and prolong his days*, Isa. liiii. 10. which plainly implies, that though the Messiah should die, yet he should rise again, and that within few days too, otherwise he would have seen corruption. Now the Gospel saith, that this Jesus *rose from the dead*, Matt. xxviii. 6. Luke xxiv. 6. and that he was *seen* of several *after his resurrection*, as of Mary Magdalen, Matt. xxviii. 9. *of the eleven disciples*, ver. 16, 17, 18. Mark xvi. 14. *of the two that were going to Emmaus*, Luke xxiv. 13, 14, 15. *of Peter*, ver. 34. and *of the disciples that were gathered together, the door being shut*, John xx. 19. And, to be sure it was himself, and not an apparition, Thomas, one of the twelve, *thrust his hands into his side*, and found it flesh and blood indeed, as before, John xx. 27. *And he ate before them*, Luke xxiv. 43. which it is impossible for a spirit to do; yea, *he was seen of above five hundred at one time*, 1 Cor.

xv. 6. and of *Paul himself*, ver. 8. Neither did he lie so long as to see corruption, for he was buried but *the day before the sabbath*, Mark xv. 42. and rose the day after, chap. xvi. 1.

Lastly, he was not only to rise again, but the Law saith, *he was to ascend on high, to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts to men*, Psal. lxxviii. 18. Now this cannot but be an undoubted character of the Messiah, not only to rise from the dead, but to ascend up to heaven, and thence to disperse his gifts amongst the children of men; and that Jesus did so, is likewise evident from the Gospel; for, *after he had spoken with them, he was received up into heaven, and there sat at the right hand of God*, Mark. xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51. And he gave such *gifts to men*, as that his disciples, of a sudden, were enabled *to speak all manner of languages*, Acts ii. 8. *to work many signs and wonders*, chap. v. 12. *to heal all manner of diseases*, ver. 15, 16. yea, with a word speaking, *to cure a man lame from his mother's womb*, chap. iii. 6, 7.

Thus the Gospel seems to me to be a perfect transcript of the Law, and the histories of Jesus nothing else but the prophecies of Christ turned into an history. And when to this I join the consideration of the piety of the life which this man led, the purity of the doctrine which he taught, and the miraculosity of the works he wrought, I cannot but be farther confirmed in the truth of what is here related. For the miracles which he wrought, as the healing of the sick with a word of his mouth, raising the dead, feeding so many thousands with five loaves, and the like, were so powerful and convincing, that his very enemies, that would not believe him to be the Messiah, could scarce deny him to be a God, Joseph. Antiq. l. xviii. c. 4. And it is to this day a tenet amongst some of them, that the miracles which Jesus did were not the delusions and jugglements of the devil, but real miracles, wrought, as they say, by the virtue of the name of God, *Jehovah*, which he had gotten out of the temple. By which it is plain they acknowledged God to be the author of them, which I cannot see how he should be, unless they were agreeable to his will, and for the glory of his name.

Neither was the doctrine of the Gospel only established at the first, but likewise propagated by miracles afterwards, as it was necessary it should be. For if it had been propagated without miracles, that itself had been the greatest miracle of all. It was, no doubt, a great miracle, that a doctrine so much contrary to flesh and blood, should be propagated by any means whatsoever; but a far greater, that it should be propagated by a company of simple and illiterate men, who

had neither power to force, nor eloquence to persuade men to the embracing of it. For who would have thought that such persons as these were, should ever make any of the Jews, who expected a King for their Messiah, to advance them to temporal dignities, believe that Jesus, whom themselves scourged and crucified at Jerusalem, was the person! or, that they should be able to propagate the Gospel amongst the Gentiles also, who neither believed in the true God, nor expected any thing of a Messiah to come and redeem them? But this they did, and brought over not only many persons, but whole nations and countries, to the profession of the Gospel; propagating this most holy doctrine amongst the most barbarous and sinful people in the world, maugre all the opposition that the world, the flesh, and the devil, could make against it. Now, can any man that exerciseth his reason, think, they did all this purely by their own strength? No, sure, none of these wonderful effects could ever have been produced by any thing less than the wisdom, and power, and faithfulness of their Lord and Master, whose service they were engaged in, and who promised to be with them *to the end of the world*, Matt. xxviii. 20. Questionless, it was nothing else but the Spirit of the most high God, that went along with them, and accompanied the word they preached; otherwise, it never could have made such deep impression upon the hearts of them that heard it, as not only to command their attention, but to hinder them from resisting, when they strove and endeavoured to do it, the power and authority by which the disciples spake.

And now, methinks, I begin to perceive this divine Spirit is come upon me too, and seems, by its powerful influence, to be working up my heart into a thorough persuasion, that it is Christ, and Christ alone, I am to cast my soul upon; that it is he alone that is the way to life, and his word alone the word of life, which *whosoever believes, and is baptized into, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned*. Away then with your Paganish idolatries, your Mahometan superstitions, and Jewish ceremonies; it is the Christian religion alone that I am resolved to live and die in, because it is this alone in which I am taught to worship God aright, to obtain the pardon and remission of my sins, and to be made eternally happy. And since all its doctrines and precepts are contained in the holy Scriptures, it is necessary that I should assent unto them, as a standing revelation of God's will, and an eternal treasure of divine knowledge; whereby all that sincerely believe in Christ, may be sufficiently instructed, as well as thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Without any more ado therefore, I believe, and am verily persuaded, that all the books of the ancient Law, with all those that have been received into the Canon of the Scripture by the church of God since the coming of Christ, which we call the New Testament; I say, that all these books, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelations, are indeed the word of the eternal God, dictated by his own Spirit, unto such as himself was pleased to employ in the writing of them; and that they contain in them a perfect and complete rule of faith and manners; upon the due observance of which, I cannot fail of worshipping and serving God in such a manner as will be acceptable to him here, and of enjoying hereafter *those exceeding great and precious promises*, that he has reserved in heaven for such as do so.

Unto these books, therefore, of the Law and Gospel, I am resolved, by his grace that wrote them, to conform all the ensuing articles of my faith, and all the actions and resolutions of my life. Insomuch that whatsoever I find it hath pleased his sacred Majesty herein to assert, I believe it is my duty to believe; and whatsoever he hath been pleased to command me, I believe it is my duty to perform.

ARTICLE III.

I believe, that as there is one God, so this one God is three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THIS I confess is a mystery which I cannot possibly conceive, yet it is a truth which I can easily believe; yea, therefore it is so true, that I can easily believe it, because it is so high that I cannot possibly conceive it; for it is impossible any thing should be true of the infinite Creator, which can be fully expressed to the capacities of a finite creature: and for this reason I ever did, and ever shall, look upon those apprehensions of God to be the truest, whereby we apprehend him to be the most incomprehensible; and that to be the most true of God, which seems most impossible unto us.

Upon this ground, therefore, it is, that the mysteries of the Gospel, which I am less able to conceive, I think myself the more obliged to believe; especially this mystery of mysteries, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, which I am so far from being able to comprehend, or indeed to apprehend, that I cannot set myself seriously to think of it, or to screw up my thoughts a little concerning it, but I immediately lose myself, as in a trance, or ecstasy: that God the Father should be one

perfect God of himself, God the Son one perfect God of himself, and God the Holy Ghost one perfect God of himself; and yet these three should be but one perfect God of himself; so that one should be perfectly three, and three perfectly one, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost should be three, and yet but one; but one, and yet three! O heart-amazing, thought-devouring, inconceivable mystery! Who cannot believe it to be true of the glorious Deity! Certainly, none but such as are able to apprehend it, which, I am sure, I cannot, and believe no other creature can. And, because no creature can possibly conceive how it should be so, I therefore believe it really to be so, viz. that the Being of all beings is but one in essence, yet three in subsistence; but one nature, yet three persons; and that those three persons in that one nature, though absolutely distinct from one another, are yet but the same God. And I believe, these three persons in this one nature are indeed to one another, as they are expressed to be to us; that the one is really a Father to the other, that the other is really a Son to him, and the third the product of both; and yet, that there is neither first, second, nor third, amongst them, either in time or nature. So that he that begat was not at all before him that was begotten, nor he that proceeded from them both any whit after either of them. And therefore, that God is not termed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as if the divine nature of the one should beget the divine nature of the second; or the divine nature of the first and second should issue forth the divine nature of the third; (for then there would be three divine natures, and so three Gods essentially distinct from one another; by this means also, only the Father would be truly God, because he only would be essentially of and from himself, and the other two from him:) but what I think myself obliged to believe is, that it was not the divine nature, but the divine person of the Father, which did, from eternity, beget the divine person of the Son; and from the divine persons of the Father and of the Son, did, from eternity, proceed the divine person of the Holy Ghost; and so one not being before the other in time or nature, as they are from eternity three perfectly distinct persons, so they are but one coessential God. But dive not, O my soul, too deep into this bottomless ocean, this abyss of mysteries! It is the Holy of Holies, presume not to enter into it; but let this suffice thee, that he who best knows himself hath avouched it of himself, and therefore thou oughtest to believe it. See Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* And again, 1. John

ver. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these three are one.*

ARTICLE IV.

I believe that I was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity ; and that ever since, I have been continually conceiving mischief, and bringing forth vanity.

THIS article of my faith I must of necessity believe, whether I will or no ; for if I could not believe it to be true, I should therefore have the more cause to believe it to be so ; because, unless my heart was naturally very sinful and corrupt, it would be impossible for me not to believe that which I have so much cause continually to bewail ; or, if I do not bewail it, I have still the more cause to believe it ; and therefore am so much the more persuaded of it, by how much the less I find myself affected with it. For certainly I must be a hard-hearted wretch indeed, steeped in sin, and fraught with corruption to the highest, if I know myself so oft to have incensed the wrath of the most high God against me, as I do, and yet not be sensible of my natural corruption, nor acknowledge myself to be by nature a child of wrath, as well as others. For I verily believe, that the want of such a due sense of myself argues as much original corruption, as murder and whoredom do actual pollution. And I shall ever suspect those to be the most under the power of that corruption, that labour most by arguments to divest it of its power.

And therefore for my own part, I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to go about to confute that by wilful arguments, which I find so true by woful experience. If there be not a bitter root in my heart, whence proceeds so much bitter fruit in my life and conversation ? Alas ! I can neither set my head nor heart about any thing, but I still show myself to be the sinful offspring of sinful parents, by being the sinful parent of a sinful offspring : nay, I do not only betray the inbred venom of my heart, by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also, with sin. I cannot pray, but I sin ; I cannot hear, or preach, a sermon, but I sin ; I cannot give an alms, or receive the sacrament, but I sin ; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them ; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of

my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam. Inasmuch that whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin.

And whence can such a continued stream of corruption flow, but from the corrupt cistern of my heart? And whence can that corrupt cistern of my heart be filled, but from the corrupt fountain of my nature? Cease therefore, O my soul, to gainsay the power of original sin within thee, and labour now to subdue it under thee. But why do I speak of my subduing this sin myself? Surely this would be both an argument of it, and an addition to it. It is to thee, O my God, who art both the searcher and cleanser of hearts, that I desire to make my moan! It is to thee I cry out in the bitterness of my soul, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Who shall? Oh! who can do it, but thyself? Arise thou, therefore, O my God, and show thyself as infinitely merciful in the pardoning, as thou art infinitely powerful in the purging away my sins!

ARTICLE V.

I believe the Son of God became the son of man; that I the son of man might become the son of God.

OH! how comfortably does this raise me, from the lowest abasement of sin and misery, which I have before acknowledged to be my natural state, to the highest exaltation of happiness and glory in a spiritual one! This is that great article of faith, by which all the benefits of our Saviour's death and passion are made over to me in the new covenant, and by which, if I perform the conditions therein required, I shall not only be retrieved from the bondage and corruption that is inherent in me as a child of wrath, but be justified and accepted as the son of God, and be made a joint-heir with Christ. This is a point of the greatest moment and concern, which, by the grace and assistance of him of whom I speak, and in whom I thus believe, I shall therefore be the more exact and particular in the searching and examining into.

Now when I say and believe that God became man, I do not

so understand it, as if the divine nature took upon it a human person, but that a divine person took upon him the human nature; *i. e.* it was not the divine nature in general, without respect to the persons, but one of the persons in the divine nature which took flesh upon him. And yet, to speak precisely, it was not the divine person abstracted or distinct from the divine nature, but it was the divine nature in that person which thus took upon it the human. And this was not the first or third, but the second person only in the sacred Trinity, that thus assumed our nature; as, considering the mysterious order and economy of the divine persons, it seems to be necessary that it should.

For, first, the Father could not have become this Son of man, because then he that had begotten from eternity, should have been begotten in time; by which means, as he was the Father to the Son, so would the Son also have been the Father unto him; and so the order betwixt the Father and the Son destroyed.

Nor, secondly, could the Holy Ghost have taken our nature upon him, because the bond of personal union betwixt the divine and human nature is from the Spirit, (and thence it is, that every one that is partaker of Christ's person, is partaker of his Spirit also,) which could not be, if the Spirit itself had been the person assuming. For I cannot conceive how the same person could unite itself, by itself, to the assumed nature: and therefore we read, that in the Virgin's conception of our Saviour, it was neither the Father, nor the Son himself, but the Spirit of the Most High, which did overshadow her, Luke i. 35.

And farther, if the Holy Ghost had been my Redeemer, who should have been my Sanctifier? If he had died personally for me, who should have applied his death effectually to me? That I could not do it myself is, beyond contradiction, evident; and that either the Father or the Son should do it, is not agreeable to the nature or order of the divine operations; they, as I believe, never acting any thing *ad extra* personally, but by the Spirit proceeding from them both. And therefore it is, that Christ, to comfort his disciples after his death, promised them in his life-time that he would send them *the Comforter*, John xvi. 7. which is *the Spirit of truth*, ver. 13. He doth not say, he will come again personally, but mystically to them, by his Spirit.

But now that the Spirit, whose office it is to apply the merit and mediation of God-man to me, could not have done it, if himself had been that God-man, seems to me as clear and ma-

nifest as the other : for if he had done it, he should either have done it by the Father, by the Son, or by himself. He could not do it by the Father, nor the Son, because he does nothing by them, but all things from them. The Father acts in the Son by the Spirit, the Son from the Father by the Spirit, the Spirit from the Father and the Son. And therefore it likewise follows, that as the Spirit could not unite itself before, so neither can it apply itself here, to the human nature ; for to assume the human nature into the divine, and to apply the divine nature to the human, are two distinct offices, and therefore to be performed by two distinct persons. The first could have been done only by one that was really man, as well as God ; the other only by one that was merely God, and not man.

And that must needs be so ; for otherwise God should act upon man by man, by the person man, as well as God ; and, by consequence, all the dispensations of his grace towards us would have been stopped in the frailty of the human, though perfect nature. So that it would have availed me nothing if the Spirit had taken my nature upon him ; because, though he had assumed the human, I could not thence have participated of the divine nature ; nay, therefore I could not have participated of this, because he had assumed that by which alone I could be brought into this capacity ; and so by this means I should be farther off than I was before.

And lastly, as, if the Father had become man, there would have been two Fathers ; so, if the Spirit had become man, there would have been two Sons, the second person begotten from eternity, and the third person begotten in time. But now, by the Son's taking our nature upon him, these and far greater difficulties are avoided, which we might easily perceive, could we sufficiently dive into the depth of that wisdom of the Father, in sending his Son, rather than his Spirit, or coming himself in his own person. Howsoever, to us it cannot but seem most equitable, (if reason may hold the balance,) that he who is the middle person, betwixt the Father and the Spirit, should become the Mediator betwixt God and man ; and that he who is the Son of God in the glorious Trinity, should become the Son of man in this gracious mystery.

But, on the other side, as it was not the divine nature, but a divine person, that did assume, so neither was it a human person, but the human nature, that was assumed ; for otherwise, if he had assumed the person of any one man in the world, his death had been beneficial to none but him whose person he thus assumed and represented. Whereas, now that

he has assumed the nature of man in general, all that partake of that nature are capable of partaking of the benefits he purchased for us, by dying in our stead. And thus, under each Adam, as the representation was universal, so were the effects designed to be: *for as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Again, when I say the Son of God became the Son of man, I do not mean as if by this he should cease to be what he was before, the Son of God; for he did not leave his Godhead to take upon him the manhood; but I believe he took the manhood into his Godhead; he did not put off the one to put on the other, but he put one upon the other: neither do I believe that the human nature, when assumed into the divine, ceased to be human; but as the divine person so assumed the human nature as still to remain a divine person, so the human nature was so assumed into a divine person as still to remain a human nature; God therefore so became man, as to be both perfectly God and perfectly man, united together in one person.

I say, in one person; for if he should be God and man in distinct persons, this would avail me no more than if he should be God only, and not man, or man only, and not God; because the merit and value both of his active and passive obedience is grounded merely upon the union of the two natures in one and the same person. He therefore, by his life and death, merited so much for us, because the same person that so lived and died was God as well as man; and every action that he did, and every passion that he suffered, was done and suffered by him that was God as well as man. And hence it is that Christ, of all the persons in the world, is so fit, yea, only fit, to be my Redeemer, Mediator, and Surety, because he alone is both God and man in one person. If he was not man, he could not undertake that office; if he was not God, he could not perform it. If he was not man, he could not be capable of being bound for me; if he was not God, he would not be able to pay my debt. It was man by whom the covenant was broken, and therefore man must have suitable punishment laid upon him: it was God with whom it was broken, and therefore God must have sufficient satisfaction made unto him: and as for that satisfaction, it was man that had offended, and therefore man alone could make it suitable; it was God that was offended, and therefore God alone could make it sufficient.

The sum of all is this: man can suffer, but he cannot satisfy; God can satisfy, but he cannot suffer; but Christ being both God and man, can both suffer and satisfy too; and so is perfectly fit both to suffer for man, and to make satisfaction

unto God ; to reconcile God to man, and man to God. And thus, Christ having assumed my nature into his person, and so satisfied divine justice for my sins, I am received into grace and favour again with the most high God.

Upon this principle, I believe that I, by nature the son of man, am made by grace the son of God, as really as Christ, by nature the Son of God, was made by office the son of man : and so, though in myself *I may say to corruption, Thou art my mother* ; yet in Christ I may say to God, *Abba Father*. Neither do I believe this to be a metaphorical expression, viz. because he doth that for me which a father doth for his child, even provide for me whilst young, and give me my portion when come to age ; but I believe, that in the same propriety of speech that my earthly father was called the father of my natural self, is God the Father of my spritual self: for, why was my earthly father called my father, but because that I, as to my natural being, was born of what proceeded from him, viz. his seed ? Why so, as to my spritual being, am I born of what proceeds from God, his Spirit ; and as I was not born of the very substance of my natural parents, but only of what came from them ; so neither is my spritual self begotten again, quickened, and constituted of the very substance of my heavenly Father, God, but of the Spirit, and spritual influences proceeding from him. Thus therefore it is that I believe that Christ, the Son of God, became the son of man ; and thus it is that I believe myself, the son of man, to be made thereby the son of God. *I believe, O my God and Father, do thou help mine unbelief ; and every day more and more increase my faith, till itself shall be done away, and turned into the most perfect vision and fruition of thine own most glorious God-head !*

ARTICLE VI.

I believe that Christ lived to God, and died for sin, that I might die to sin, and live with God.

AND thus by faith I follow my Saviour from the womb to the tomb, from his incarnation to his death and passion, believing all that he did or suffered to be for my sake ; for Christ did not only take my nature upon him, but he suffered and obeyed, he underwent miseries and undertook duties for me ; so that not only his passive, but likewise his active obedience unto God.

in that nature, was still for me. Not as if I believed his duty as man was not God's debt by the law of creation ; yes, I believe that he owed that obedience unto God, that if he had committed but one sin, and that of the lightest tincture, in all his life-time, he would have been so far from being able to satisfy for my sins, that he could not have satisfied for his own ; *for such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's,* Heb. vii. 26, 27. So that if he had not had these qualifications in their absolute perfection, he could not have been our High-Priest, nor by consequence have made atonement for, nor expiated, any sins whatsoever. But now, though both as man, and as God-man or Mediator too, it behoved him to be thus faithful and spotless ; yet, as being God coequal and co-essential with the Father, it was not out of duty, but merely upon our account, that he thus subjected his neck to the yoke of his own law ; himself as God being the legislator or law-giver, and so no more under it than the Father himself.

And hereupon it is that I verily believe, that whatsoever Christ either did or suffered in the flesh was meritorious ; not that his life was righteous towards God, only that his death might be meritorious for us, (which, I believe, otherwise it could not have been,) but that his life was equally meritorious as righteous. So that I believe my person is as really accepted, as perfectly righteous, by the righteousness of his life imputed to me, as my sins are pardoned by God, for the bitterness of the death he suffered for them ; his righteousness being as really by faith imputed to me, as my sins were laid upon him : as these are set upon his, so is that set upon my score ; and so every thing he did in his life, as well as every thing he suffered in his death, is mine ; by the latter, God looks upon me as perfectly innocent, and therefore not to be thrown down to hell ; by the former, he looks upon me as perfectly righteous, and therefore to be brought up to heaven.

And as for his death, I believe it was not only as much, but infinitely more satisfactory to divine justice, than though I should have died to eternity. For by that means, justice is actually and perfectly satisfied already, which it could never have been by my suffering for my sins myself ; for if justice by that means could ever be satisfied, if it could ever say, *It is enough,* it could not stand with the same justice, now satisfied, still to inflict punishment, nor by consequence could the damned justly scorch in the flames of God's wrath for ever. Nei-

ther did the death of my Saviour reach only to the condemning, but likewise to the commanding power of sin ; it did not only pluck out its sting, but likewise deprive it of its strength ; so that he did not only merit by his death that I should never die for sin, but likewise that I should die to it. Neither did he only merit by his life that I should be accounted righteous in him before God, but likewise that I should be made righteous in myself by God. Yea, I believe that Christ, by his death, hath so fully discharged the debt I owe to God, that now, for the remission of my sins, and the accepting of my person, (if I perform the conditions he requires in his covenant,) I may not only appeal to the throne of grace, but likewise to the judgment seat of God ; I may not only cry, *Mercy, mercy, O gracious Father*, but *Justice, justice, my righteous God*. I may not only say, Lord, be gracious and merciful, but be just and faithful, to acquit me from that debt, and cancel that bond which my Surety hath paid for me, and which thou hast promised to accept of ; being *not only gracious and merciful, but just and faithful, to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness*, 1 John i. 9.

ARTICLE VII.

I believe that Christ rose from the grave, that I might rise from sin ; and that he is ascended into heaven, that I may come unto him.

As Christ came from heaven to earth, so I believe he went from earth to heaven, and all for the accomplishment of my salvation ; that, after he had lived a most holy life, he died a most cruel death ; that he was apprehended, arraigned, accused, and condemned, by such as could not pronounce the sentence against him, did not himself, at the same time, vouchsafe them breath to do it ; and that he that came into the world to take away the sins of it, to bring sinners to the joys of life, was himself, by those very sinners, brought into the pangs of death. But yet, as it was not in the power of death long to detain the Lord of life ; so, though worms had power to send him to the grave, yet I believe they had not power or time to feed upon him there ; for *he rose again from the dead the third day* : he lay three days, that I might believe he was not alive, but dead : he arose the third day, that I might believe he is not dead, but lives : he descended down to hell, that he

might make full satisfaction to God's justice for my sins ; but he is now ascended up into heaven, that he may make intercession to God's mercy for my soul : thither I believe he is gone, and there I believe he is, not as a private person, but as the Head and Saviour of his church. And under this capacity, as I believe that Christ is there for me, so I am there in him ; *for where the head is, there must the members be also* ; that is, I am as really there in him, my representative now, as I shall be in my own proper person hereafter ; and he is as really preparing my mansion for me there, as I am preparing myself for that mansion here. Nay, I believe that he is not only preparing a mansion for me in heaven, but that himself is likewise preparing me for this mansion upon earth ; continually sending down and issuing forth from himself fresh supplies and influences of his grace and Spirit ; and all to qualify me for his service, and *make me meet to be partaker of his inheritance with the saints in light*.

Which inheritance, I believe, he doth not so much desire his Father to bestow upon me, as claims it for me ; himself having purchased it with the price of his own blood. And as he hath purchased the inheritance itself, so likewise the way unto it for me ; and therefore sues out for the pardon of those sins, and subduing those corruptions, which would make me unworthy of it ; and for the conveyance of those graces to me, whereby I may walk directly to it : not only saying to his Father concerning me, as Paul said to Philemon concerning Onesimus, *if this thy servant oweth thee any thing, set it upon my account, I will repay it* ; but what this thy servant oweth thee, see it is set upon my score already, and I have paid it ; what punishments he is indebted to thee, for all the offences he hath committed against thee, behold I have borne them already ; see how I have been *wounded for his transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities ; the chastisement of his peace was upon me ; with my stripes, therefore, let him be healed*, Isa. liii. 5. And thus, as he once shed his blood for me amongst men, he now pleads it for me before God ; and that not only for the washing out the guilt of my transgressions, but likewise for the washing away the filth of my corruptions ; himself having purchased the donation of the Spirit from the Father, he there claims the communication of it unto me.

And, that he hath thus undertaken to plead my cause for me, I have it under his own hand and seal ; himself by his Spirit assuring me, that if I *sin, I have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous*, 1 John ii. 1. So that I believe he is not so much my solicitor at the mercy-seat, as my advo-

rate at the judgment-seat of God, there pleading my right and title to the crown of glory, and to every step of the way that I must go through the kingdom of grace unto it. In a word, I believe that Christ, upon promise and engagement to pay such a price for it in time, did purchase this inheritance for me from eternity; whereupon I was even then immediately chosen and elected into it; and had, by this means, a place in heaven, before I had any being upon earth: and, when the time appointed by covenant was come, I believe Christ, according to his promise, paid the purchase-money, even laid down his life for me; and then forthwith went up and took possession of this my kingdom, not for himself, but for me, as my proxy and representative: so that, whilst I am in my infancy, under age, I am in possession, though I have not as yet the enjoyment of this my inheritance; but that is reserved for me till I come at age. And howsoever, though I do not enjoy the whole as yet, my Father allows me as much of it as he sees convenient, so much grace and so much comfort as he thinks best; which are as a pledge of what he hath laid up for me in his kingdom, which is above.

ARTICLE VIII.

I believe, that my person is only justified by the merit of Christ imputed to me; and that my nature is only sanctified by the Spirit of Christ implanted in me.

AND thus I do not only believe Christ to be my Saviour, but I believe only Christ to be my Saviour. It was he alone that trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath, filled with the sour and bitter grapes of my sins. It was he that carried on the great work of my salvation, being himself both the *Author and the Finisher* of it. I say, it was he, and he alone; for what person or persons in the world could do it besides himself? The angels could not if they would, the devils would not if they could; and as for my fellow-creatures, I may as well satisfy for their sins as they for mine; and how little able, even the best of us are to do either, *i. e.* to atone either for our own transgressions, or those of others, every man's experience will sufficiently inform him. For how should we, poor worms of the earth, ever hope, by the slime and mortar (if I may so speak) of our own natural abilities, to raise up a tower, *whose top may reach heaven?* Can we expect by the strength of our own hands to take heaven by violence? or by the price of our works

to purchase eternal glory? It is a matter of admiration to me, how any one that pretends to the use of his reason can imagine that he should be accepted before God for what comes from himself! For how is it possible that I should be justified by good works, when I can do no good works at all before I be first justified? My works cannot be accepted as good till my person be so; nor can my person be accepted by God, till first ingrafted into Christ; before which ingrafting into the true vine, it is impossible I should bring forth good fruit; for *the ploughing of the wicked is sin*, says Solomon, Prov. xxi. 4. yea, *the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord*, chap. xv. 8. And if both the civil and spiritual actions of the wicked be sin, which of all their actions shall have the honour to justify them before God? I know not how it is with others, but for my own part, I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed in all my life-time with that reverence, or heard with that attention, or received the Sacrament with that faith, or did any other work whatsoever with that pure heart and single eye, as I ought to have done. Insomuch that I look upon all my *righteousnesses but as filthy rags*; and it is in the robes only of the righteousness of the Son of God that I dare appear before the Majesty of heaven. Nay, suppose I could at length attain to that perfection as to do good works, works exactly conformable to the will of God; yet they must have better eyes than I, that can see how my obedience in one kind can satisfy for my disobedience in another; or how that which God commands from me, should merit any thing from him.

No; I believe there is no person can merit any thing from God, but he that can do more than is required of him, which it is impossible any creature should do. For, in that it is a creature, it continually depends upon God, and therefore is bound to do every thing it can by any means possibly do for him; especially considering that the creature's dependence upon God is such, that it is beholden to him even for every action that issues from it; without whom, as it is impossible any thing should be, so likewise that any thing should act, especially what is good. So that to say, a man of himself can merit any thing from God, is as much as to say, that he can merit by that which of himself he doth not do; or that one person can merit by that which another performs, which is a plain contradiction. For in that it merits, it is necessarily implied that itself acts that by which it is said to merit; but in that it doth not depend upon itself, but upon another in what it acts, it is as necessarily implied, that itself doth not do that by which it is said to merit.

Upon this account, I shall never be induced to believe that any creature, by any thing it doth or can do, can merit or deserve any thing at the hand of God, till it can be proved that a creature can merit by that which God doth: or that God can be bound to bestow any thing upon us, for that which himself alone is pleased to work in us, and by us; which, in plain terms, would be as much as to say, that because God hath been pleased to do one good turn for us, he is therefore bound to do more; and because God hath enabled us to do our duty, he should therefore be bound to give us glory.

It is not therefore in the power of any person in the world to merit any thing from God, but such a one who is absolutely coessential with him, and so depends not upon him, either for his existence or actions. And as there is no person can merit any thing from God, unless he be essentially the same with him, so likewise unless he be personally distinct from him; forasmuch as though a person may be said to merit for himself, yet he cannot be said, without a gross solecism, to merit any thing from himself. So that he that is not as perfectly another person from God, as really the same in nature with him, can never be said to merit any thing at his hands.

But farther, God the Father could not properly be said to do it in his own person, because, being (according to our conception) the party offended, should he have undertaken this work for me, he in his own person must have undertaken to make satisfaction to his own person for the offences committed against himself; which if he should have done, his mercy might have been much exalted, but his justice could not have been satisfied by it. For justice requires, either that the party offending should be punished for these offences, or, at least, some fit person in his stead, which the Father himself cannot be said to be, in that he was the party offended, to whom this satisfaction was to be made; and it is absurd to suppose, that the same person should be capable of making satisfaction both by and to himself at the same time.

It remains therefore, that there were only two persons in the Holy Trinity who could possibly be invested with this capacity; the Son, and the Spirit. As to the latter, though he be indeed the same in nature with the Father, and a distinct person from him, and so far in a capacity to make satisfaction to him; yet not being capable both of assuming the human nature into the divine, and also uniting and applying the divine nature to the human, (as I have shewed before in the fifth Article,) he was not in a capacity of making satisfaction for man; none being fit to take that office upon him, but he that of him-

self was perfectly God, and likewise capable of becoming perfectly man, by uniting both natures in the same person; which the Holy Ghost could not do, because he was the person by whom, and therefore could not be the person also in whom, this union of the two natures was to be perfected. And yet it was by this means, and this method only, that any person could have been completely capacitated to have borne the punishment of our sins: he that was only man could not do it, because the sin was committed against God; and he that was only God could not do it, because the sin was committed by man.

From all which, as I may fairly infer, so I hope I may safely fix, my faith in this article, viz. that there was only one person in the whole world that could do this great work for me, of justifying my person before God, and so glorifying my soul with him; and that was the Son of God, the second person in the glorious Trinity begotten of the substance of the Father from all eternity; whom I apprehend and believe to have brought about the great work of my justification before God, after this or the like manner.

He being in and of himself, perfectly coequal, coessential, and coeternal with the Father, was in no sort bound to do more than the Father himself did; and so whatsoever he should do which the Father did not, might justly be accounted as a work of supererogation; which, without any violation of divine justice, might be set upon the account of some other persons, even of such whom he pleased to do it for. And hereupon, out of mercy and compassion to fallen man, he covenants with his Father, that if it pleased his Majesty to accept it, he would take upon him the suffering of those punishments which were due from him to man, and the performance of those duties which were due from man to him; so that whatsoever he should thus humble himself to do or suffer, should wholly be upon the account of man, himself not being any ways bound to do or suffer more in time, than he had from eternity.

This motion the Father, out of the riches of his grace and mercy, was pleased to consent unto: and hereupon, the Son assuming our nature into his Deity, becomes subject and obedient both to the moral and ceremonial laws of his Father; and at last to death itself, *even the death of the cross*. In the one he paid an active, in the other a passive obedience; and so did not only fulfil the will of his Father in obeying what he had commanded, but satisfied his justice in suffering the punishment due to us for the transgressing of it. His active

obedience, as it was infinitely pure and perfect, did without doubt infinitely transcend all the obedience of the sons of men, even of Adam too in his primitive state. For the obedience of Adam, make the best of it, was but the obedience of a finite creature; whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one that was infinite God, as well as man. By which means the laws of God had higher obedience performed to them, than themselves in their primitive institution required; for being made only to finite creatures, they could command no more than the obedience of finite creatures; whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one who was the infinite Creator, as well as a finite creature.

Now this obedience being more than Christ was bound to, and only performed upon the account of those whose nature he had assumed, as we by faith lay hold upon it, so God through grace imputes it to us, as if it had been performed by us in our own persons. And hence it is, that as in one place Christ is said to be *made sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. so in another place he is said to be made our righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. And in the forecited place, 2 Cor. v. 21. as he is said to be made *sin for us*, so we are said to be *made righteousness* in him. But what righteousness? Our own? No, *the righteousness of God*, radically his, but imputatively ours: and this is the only way whereby we are said to be *made the righteousness of God*, even by the righteousness of Christ's being made ours, by which we are accounted and reputed as righteous before God.

These things considered, I very much wonder how any man can presume to exclude the active obedience of Christ from our justification before God; as if what Christ did in the flesh was only of duty, not at all of merit; or as if it was for himself and not for us. Especially when I consider, that suffering the penalty is not what the law primarily requireth; for the law of God requires perfect obedience, the penalty being only threatened to, not properly required of, the breakers of it. For, let a man suffer the penalty of the law in never so high a manner, he is not therefore accounted obedient to it; his punishment doth not speak his innocence, but rather his transgression of the law.

Hence it is, that I cannot look upon Christ as having made full satisfaction to God's justice for me, unless he had performed the obedience I owe to God's laws, as well as borne the punishment that is due to my sins: for, though he should have borne my sins, I cannot see how that could denominate me righteous or obedient to the law, so as to entitle me to eternal

life, according to the tenor of the old law, *Do this and live*, Lev. xviii. 5. Which old covenant is not disannulled or abrogated by the covenant of grace, but rather established, Rom. iii. 31. especially as to the obedience it requires from us in order to the life it promiseth; otherwise the laws of God would be mutable, and so come short of the laws of the very Medes and Persians, which altered not. Obedience therefore is as strictly required under the New, as it was under the Old Testament, but with this difference; there, obedience in our own persons was required as absolutely necessary; here, obedience in our Surety is accepted as completely sufficient.

But now, if we have no such obedience in our Surety, (as we cannot have if he did not live as well as die for us,) let any one tell me what title he hath, or can have, to eternal life? I suppose he will tell me he hath none in himself, because he hath not performed perfect obedience to the law. And I tell him, he hath none in Christ, unless Christ performed that obedience for him, which none can say he did, that doth not believe his active as well as passive obedience to be wholly upon our account.

And now I speak of Christ's being our Surety, as the Apostle calls him, Heb. vii. 22. methinks this gives much light to the truth in hand: for what is a surety, but one that undertakes to pay whatsoever he, whose surety he is, is bound to pay, in case the debtor prove non-solvent, or unable to pay it himself? And thus is Christ, under the notion of a surety, bound to pay whatever we owe to God, because we ourselves are not able to pay it in our own persons.

Now there are two things that we owe to God, which this our Surety is bound to pay for us, viz. first and principally, obedience to his laws, as he is our Creator and Governor; and, secondly, by consequence, the punishment that is annexed to the breach of these laws, of which we are guilty. Now, though Christ should pay the latter part of our debt for us, by bearing the punishment that is due unto us; yet, if he did not pay the former and principal part of it too, *i. e.* perform the obedience which we owe to God, he would not fully have performed the office of suretiship which he undertook for us; and so would be but a half-mediator, or half-saviour, which are such words as I dare scarce pronounce, for fear of blasphemy.

So that, though it is the death of Christ by which I believe my sins are pardoned, yet it is the life of Christ by which I believe my person is accepted. His passion God accounts as suffered by me, and therefore I shall not die for sin: his obedience God accounts as performed by me, and therefore I shall

live with him. Not as if I believed, that Christ so performed obedience for me that I should be discharged from my duty to him; but only that I should not be condemned by God in not discharging my duty to him in so strict a manner as is required. I believe the active obedience of Christ will stand me in no stead, unless I endeavour after sincere obedience in mine own person; his active as well as his passive obedience being imputed unto none, but only to such as apply it to themselves by faith; which faith in Christ will certainly put such as are possessed of it upon obedience unto God. This therefore is the righteousness, and the manner of that justification, whereby I hope to stand before the judgment-seat of God; even by God's imputing my sins to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to me; looking upon me as one not to be punished for my sins, because Christ hath suffered, but to be received into the joys of glory, because Christ hath performed obedience for me, and does by faith, through grace, impute it to me.

And thus it is into the merit of Christ that I resolve the whole work of my salvation; and this not only as to that which is wrought without me for the justification of my person, but likewise as to what is wrought within me for the sanctification of my nature. As I cannot have a sin pardoned without Christ, so neither can I have a sin subdued without him; neither the fire of God's wrath can be quenched, nor yet the filth of my sins washed away, but by the blood of Christ.

So that I wonder as much at the doctrine that some men have advanced concerning free-will, as I do at that which others have broached in favour of good works; and it is a mystery to me, how any that ever had experience of God's method in working out sin, and planting grace in our hearts, should think they can do it by themselves, or any thing in order to it. Not that I do in the least question but that every man may be saved that will; (for this I believe is a real truth;) but I do not believe, that any man of himself can will to be saved. Wheresoever God enables a soul effectually to will salvation, he will certainly give salvation to that soul; but I believe that it is impossible for any soul to will salvation of himself, as to enjoy salvation without God.

And this my faith is not grounded upon a roving fancy, but the most solid reasons: forasmuch as of ourselves we are not able in our understandings to discern the evil from the good; much less then are we able in our wills to prefer the good before the evil; the will never settling upon any thing but what the judgment discovers to it. But now, that my natural judgment is unable to apprehend and represent to my will the true

and only good under its proper notion, my own too sad experience could sufficiently persuade me, though I had neither Scripture nor reason for it. And yet, the Scripture also is so clear in this point, that I could not have denied it, though I should never have had any experience of it; the Most High expressly telling me, that the *natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *Neither can he know them, i. e.* there is an absolute impossibility in it, that any one remaining in his natural principles, without the assistance of God, should apprehend or conceive the excellency of spiritual objects. So that a man may as soon read the letter of the Scripture without eyes, as understand the mysteries of the Gospel without grace. And this is not at all to be wondered at; especially if we consider the vast and infinite disproportion betwixt the object and the faculty; the object to be apprehended being nothing less than the best of beings, God; and the faculty whereby we apprehend it, nothing more than the power of a finite creature, polluted with the worst of evils, sin.

So that I believe it is a thousand times easier for a worm, a fly, or any other despicable insect whatsoever, to understand the affairs of men, than for the best of men in a natural state to apprehend the things of God. No; there is none can know God, nor by consequence any thing that is really good, but only so far as they are partakers of the divine nature: we must in some measure be like to God, before we can have any true conceptions of him, or be really delighted with him: we must have a spiritual sight, before we can behold spiritual things; which every natural man being destitute of, he can see no comeliness in Christ, why he should be desired; nor any amiableness in religion, why it should be embraced.

And hence it is that I believe, the first work which God puts forth upon the soul in order to its conversion, is to raise up a spiritual light within it, to clear up its apprehensions about spiritual matters, so as to enable the soul to look upon God as the chiefest good, and the enjoyment of him as the greatest bliss; whereby the soul may clearly discern betwixt good and evil, and evidently perceive that nothing is good but so far as it is like to God; and nothing evil, but so far as it resembles sin.

But this is not all the work that God hath to do upon a sinful soul, to bring it to himself; for though I must confess, that in natural things the will always follows the ultimate dictates of the understanding, so as to choose and embrace what the understanding represents to it, under the comely dress of good

and amiable, and to refuse and abhor whatever under the same representation appears to be evil and dangerous ; I say, though I must confess it is so in natural, yet I believe it is not so in spiritual matters. For though the understanding may have never such clear apprehensions of spiritual good, yet the will is not at all affected with it, without the joint operations of the grace of God upon us ; all of us too sadly experiencing what St. Paul long ago bewailed in himself, that *what we do, we allow not*, Rom. vii. 15. that though our judgments condemn what we do, yet we cannot choose but do it ; though our understandings clearly discover to us the excellency of grace and glory, yet our wills, overpowered with their own corruptions, are strangely hurried into sin and misery. I must confess, it is a truth which I should scarcely have ever believed, if I had not such daily experience of it : but, alas ! there is scarce an hour in a day, but I may go about lamenting, with Medea in Seneca, *Video meliora, proboque ; deteriora sequor* : though I see what is good, yea, and judge it to be the better, yet I very often choose the worse.

And the reason of it is, because as by our fall from God the whole soul was desperately corrupted, so it is not the rectifying of one faculty which can make the whole straight ; but as the whole was changed from holiness to sin, so must the whole be changed again from sin to holiness, before it can be inserted into a state of grace, or so much as an act of grace be exerted in it.

Now therefore, the understanding and will being two distinct faculties, or at least two distinct acts in the soul, it is possible for the understanding to be so enlightened, as to prefer the good before the evil, and yet for the will to remain so corrupt, as to choose the evil before the good. And hence it is, that where God intends to work over a soul to himself, he doth not only pass an enlightening act upon the understanding and its apprehensions, but likewise a sanctifying act upon the will and its affections, that when the soul perceives the glory of God, and the beauty of holiness, it may presently close with, and entertain it with the choicest of its affections. And without God's thus drawing it, the understanding could never allure the soul to good.

And therefore it is, that for all the clear discoveries which the understanding may make to itself concerning the glories of the invisible world, yet God assures us, it is himself alone that affects the soul with them, by inclining its will to them : for it is God *which worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. So that though God offer

heaven to all that will accept of it in his holy Scripture ; yet none can accept of it but such whom himself stirs up by his holy Spirit to endeavour after it. And thus we find it was in Israel's return from Babylon to Jerusalem, though King Cyrus made a proclamation, that whosoever would, might go up to worship at the holy city, Ezra i. 3. yet there was none that accepted of the offer, *but those whose spirit God had raised to go up*, ver. 5. So here, though God doth, as it were, proclaim to all the world, that whosoever will come to Christ shall certainly be saved ; yet it doth not follow that all shall receive salvation from him, because it is certain all will not come ; or rather none can will to come, unless God enables them.

I am sure, to say none shall be saved but those that will of themselves, would be sad news for me, whose will is naturally so backward to every thing that is good. But this is my comfort, I am as certain my salvation is of God, as I am certain it cannot be of myself. It is Christ who vouchsafed to die for me, who hath likewise promised to live within me ; it is he that will work all my works, both for me and in me too. In a word, it is to him I am beholden not only for my spiritual blessings and enjoyments, but even for my temporal ones too, which in and through his name I daily put up my petitions for. So that I have not so much as a morsel of bread in mercy from God, but only upon the account of Christ ; not a drop of drink but what flows unto me in his blood. It is he that is the very blessing of all my blessings, without whom my very mercies would prove but curses, and my prosperity would but work my ruin.

Whither therefore should I go, my dear and blessed Saviour, but unto thee ? *Thou hast the words of eternal life*. And how shall I come, but by thee ? Thou hast the treasures of all grace. O thou, that hast wrought out my salvation for me, be pleased likewise to work this salvation in me ! Give me, I beseech thee, such a measure of thy grace, as to believe in thee here upon earth, and then give me such degrees of glory, as fully to enjoy thee for ever in heaven !

ARTICLE IX.

I believe God entered into a double covenant with man, the covenant of works made with the first, and the covenant of grace made in the second Adam.

THAT the most high God should take a piece of earth, work it up into the frame and fashion of a man, and *breathe into his nostrils the breath of life*, and then should enter into a covenant with it, and should say, *Do this and live*, when man was bound to do it, whether he could live by it or no, was, without doubt, a great and amazing act of love and condescension ; but that, when this covenant was unhappily broken by the first, God should instantly vouchsafe to renew it in the second Adam, and that too upon better terms, and more easy conditions than the former, was yet a more surprising mercy : for, the same day that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, did God make him this promise, that *the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15. And this promise he afterwards explained and confirmed by the mouth of his prophet Jeremiah, saying, *This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people*, Jer. xxxi. 33. And again by St. Paul, under the New Testament, almost in the self-same words, Heb. viii. 10.

A covenant so gracious and condescending, that it seems to be made up of nothing else but promises. The first was, properly speaking, a covenant of works, requiring on man's part a perfect and unsinning obedience, without any extraordinary grace or assistance from God, to enable him to perform it ; but here, in the second, God undertakes both for himself and for man too, having digested the conditions to be performed by us, into promises to be fulfilled by himself, viz. that he will not only pardon our sins if we do repent, but that he will give us repentance, that so we may deserve his pardon ; that he will not only give us life if we come to Christ, but even draw us to Christ, that so he may give us life ; and so, not only make us happy if we will be holy, but make us holy, that so we may be happy : for the covenant is, not that he will be our God, if we will be his people, but he will be our God, and we shall be his people. But still, all this is in and through Christ, the Surety and Mediator of this covenant, in whom all the promises are *Yea and Amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. So that Christ

may be looked upon not only as a surety, but as a party in this covenant of grace, being not only bound to God, but likewise covenanting with him for us. As God-man he is a surety for us, but as man he must needs be a party with us, even our head in the covenant of grace, as Adam was in the covenant of works.

What, therefore, though I can do nothing in this covenant of myself, yet this is my comfort, that he hath undertaken for me who can do all things. And therefore is it called a covenant of grace, and not of works, because in it there is no work required from me, but what by grace I shall be enabled to perform.

And as for the tenor in which this covenant runs, or the *habendum* and grant which each party covenants for, it is express in these words, *I will be your God, and you shall be my people*. God covenants with us, that we shall be his people; we covenant with God, that he shall be our God. And, what can God stipulate more to us, or we restipulate more to him, than this? What doth not God promise to us, when he promises to be our God? and what doth he not require from us, when he requires us to be his people?

First, he doth not say, I will be your hope, your help, your light, your life, your sun, your shield, and your exceeding great reward; but I will be your God, which is ten thousand times more than possibly can be couched under any other expressions whatsoever, as containing under it whatsoever God is, whatsoever God hath, and whatsoever God can do. All his essential attributes are still engaged for us; we may lay claim to them, and take hold on them: so that what the Prophet saith of his righteousness and strength, *surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. I may extend to all his other attributes, and say, Surely in the Lord have I mercy to pardon me, wisdom to instruct me, power to protect me, truth to direct me, grace to crown my heart on earth, and glory to crown my head in heaven: and if what he is, then much more what he hath, is here made over by covenant to me. *He that spared not his own Son*, saith the apostle, *but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not but with him likewise freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. But what hath God to give me? Why, all he hath is briefly summed up in this short inventory; whatsoever is in heaven above, or in earth beneath, is his; and that this inventory is true, I have several witnesses to prove it; Melchisedech, Gen. xiv. 19. and Moses, Deut. x. 14. and David, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Indeed, reason itself will conclude this, that he that is

the Creator and Preserver, must, of necessity, be the Owner and Possessor, of all things ; so that let me imagine what possibly I can in all the world, I may, with the pen of reason, write under it, *This is God's* ; and if I take but the pen of faith with it, I may write, *This is mine in Jesus Christ*.

As for example ; Hath he a Son ? he hath died for me. Hath he a Spirit ? it shall live within me. Is earth his ? it shall be my provision. Is heaven his ? it shall be my portion. Hath he angels ? they shall guard me. Hath he comforts ? they shall support me. Hath he grace ? that shall make me holy. Hath he glory ? that shall make me happy. For *the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those that walk uprightly*, Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

And as he is nothing but what he is unto us, so he doth nothing but what he doth for us. So that whatsoever God doth by his ordinary providence, or (if our necessity requires) whatsoever he can do by his extraordinary power, I may be sure he doth and will do for me. Now he hath given himself to me, and taken me unto himself, what will he not do for me that he can ? And what can he not do for me that he will ? Do I want food ? God can drop down manna from the clouds, Exod. xvi. 4. or bid the quails come down and feed me with their own flesh, as they did the Israelites, ver. 13. or he can send the ravens to bring me bread and flesh, as they did his prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 6. Am I thirsty ? God can broach the rocks, and dissolve the flints into floods of water, as he did for Israel, Deut. viii. 15. Am I cast into a fiery furnace ? He can suspend the fury of the raging flames, as he did for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Dan. iii. 25. Am I thrown amongst the devouring lions ? He can stop their mouths, and make them as harmless lambs as he did for Daniel, Dan. vi. 22. Am I ready to be swallowed up by the merciless waves of the tempestuous ocean ? God can command a fish to come and ship me safe to land, and that in its own belly, as he did for his prophet Jonah, Jon. i. 17. ii. 10. Am I in prison ? God can but speak the word, as he did for St. Peter, and the chains shall immediately fall off, and the doors fly open, and I shall be set at liberty, as he was, Acts xii. 7, 8, 9, 10. And thus I can have no wants but God can supply them, no doubts but God can resolve them, no fears but God can dispel them, no dangers but God can prevent them. And it is as certain that he will, as that he can, do these things for me, himself having by covenant engaged and given himself unto me.

And as in God's giving himself, he hath given whatsoever he is, and whatsoever he hath, unto me, and will do whatsoever

he can do for me ; so in my giving myself to him, whatsoever I have I am to give to him, and whatsoever I do I am to do for him. But now, though we should thus give ourselves up wholly to God, and do whatever he requires of us, (which none, I fear, without some degree of presumption, can say he has done,) yet there is an infinite disproportion betwixt the grant on God's part, and that on ours, in that he is God, and we but creatures, the *workmanship of his own hands*, to whom it was our duty to give ourselves, whether he had ever given himself to us or no : he is ours by covenant only, not by nature ; we are his both by covenant and nature too.

Hence we may infer, that it is not only our duty to do what he hath commanded us, because he hath said, *Do this and live* ; but because he hath said, *Do this* ; yea, though he should say, *Do this and die*, it would still be our duty to do it, because we are his, wholly of his making, and therefore wholly at his disposing ; insomuch that should he put me upon doing that which would inevitably bring ruin upon me, I am not to neglect obeying him for fear of destroying myself, his will and pleasure being infinitely to be preferred before my life and salvation.

But if it were my duty to obey his commands, though I should die for it, how much more when he hath promised I shall live by it ? Nay, I shall not only live, if I obey ; but my obedience itself shall be my life and happiness ; for if I be obedient unto him, he is pleased to account himself as glorified by me ; *for herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit*, John xv. 8. Now, what greater glory can possibly be desired, than to glorify my Maker ? How can I be more glorified by God, than to have God glorified by me ? It is the glory of God to glorify himself ; and what higher glory can a creature aspire after, than that which is the infinite glory of its all-glorious Creator ? It is not therefore my duty only, but my glory, to give myself, and whatsoever I am, unto him, to *glorify him both in my body and in my spirit, which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. to lay out whatsoever I have for him, to *honour him with all my substance*, Prov. iii. 9. and *whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, to do all to his glory*, 1 Cor. x. 31. Not as if it was possible for God to receive more glory from me now, than he had himself from all eternity. No ; he was infinitely glorious then, and it is impossible for him to be more glorious now : all that we can do is duly to acknowledge that glory which he hath in himself, and to manifest it, as we ought, before others ; which, though it be no addition to his glory, yet it is the perfection of ours, which he is pleased to account as his.

As for the grant, therefore, in the covenant of grace, I be-

lieve it to be the same on our parts, with that in the covenant of works, *i. e.* that we Christians are as much bound to obey the commands he lays upon us now, as the Jews under the old covenant were. What difference there is, is wholly and solely on God's part; who, instead of expecting obedience from us, is pleased in this new covenant to give this obedience to us. Instead of saying, *Do this and live*, he hath in effect said, I will enable you to do this, that so you may live. *I will put my laws into your minds, and write them in your hearts; and I will be to you a God, and you shall be to me a people*, Heb. viii. 10. Not, I will, if you will; but, I will, and you shall. Not, if you will do this, you shall live; but you shall do this and live. So that God doth not require less from us, but only hath promised more to us in the new, than he did in the old covenant. There we were to perform obedience to God, but it was by our own strength: here, we are to perform the same obedience still, but it is by his strength. Nay, as we have more obligations to obedience upon us now than we had before, by reason of God's expressing more grace and favour to us than formerly he did; so I believe God expects more from us under the new, than he did under the old covenant. In that, he expected the obedience of men; in this, he expects the obedience of Christians, such as are by faith united unto Christ, and, in Christ, unto himself; and so are to do what they do, not by the strength of man, as before, but by the strength of the eternal God himself; who, as he at first created me for himself, so he hath now purchased me to himself, received me into covenant with him, and promised to enable me with grace to perform that obedience he requires from me; and therefore, he now expects I should lay out myself, even whatsoever I have or am, wholly for him and his glory.

This therefore being the tenor of this covenant of grace, it follows that I am now none of my own, but wholly God's. I am his by creation, and his by redemption, and therefore ought to be his by conversation. Why therefore should I live any longer to myself, who am not mine own, but God's? And why should I grudge to give myself to him, who did not grudge to give himself for me? or rather, why should I steal myself from him, who have already given myself to him? But did I say I have given myself to my God? Alas! it is but the restoring myself to him, whose I was ever since I had a being, and to whom I am still infinitely more engaged, that I can thus cordially engage myself to him; for, as I am not my own, but his, so the very giving of myself to him is not from myself, but from him. I could not have given myself to him, had he not

first given himself to me, and ever wrought my mind into this resolution of giving myself to him.

But having thus solemnly, by covenant, given myself to him, how doth it behove me to improve myself for him? My soul is his, my body his, my parts his, my gifts his, my graces his, and whatsoever is mine is his; for without him I could not have been, and therefore could have had nothing. So that I have no more cause to be proud of any thing I have, or am, than a page hath to be proud of his fine clothes, which are not his, but his master's; who bestows all this finery upon him not for his page's honour or credit, but for his own.

And thus it is with the best of us, in respect of God; he gives men parts, and learning, and riches, and grace, and desires and expects that we should make a due use of them: but to what end? not to gain honour and esteem to ourselves, to make us proud and haughty; but to give him the honour due to his name, and so employ them as instruments in promoting his glory and service. So that whensoever we do not lay out ourselves to the utmost of our power for him, it is downright sacrilege; it is robbing God of that which is more properly his, than any man in the world can call any thing he hath his own.

Having therefore thus wholly surrendered and given up myself to God, so long as it shall please his Majesty to entrust me with myself, to lend me my being in the lower world, or to put any thing else into my hands, as time, health, strength, parts, or the like; I am resolved, by his grace, to lay out all for his glory. All the faculties of my soul, as I have given them to him, so will I endeavour to improve them for him; they shall still be at his most noble service; my understanding shall be his, to know him; my will his, to choose him; my affections his, to embrace him; and all the members of my body shall act in subserviency to him.

And thus having given myself to God on earth, I hope God, in a short time, will take me to himself in heaven; where as I gave myself to him in time he will give himself to me unto all eternity.

ARTICLE X.

I believe, that as God entered into a covenant of grace with us, so hath he signed this covenant to us by a double seal, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

As the covenant of works had two sacraments, viz. *the tree of life*, and *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*; the first signifying and sealing life and happiness to the performance, the other death and misery to the breach of it: so the covenant of grace was likewise sealed with two typical sacraments, *Circumcision*, and the *Passover*. The former was annexed at God's first making his covenant with Abraham's person; the other was added at his fulfilling the promises of it to his seed or posterity, which were therefore styled, *the promised Seed*. But these being only typical of the true and spiritual sacraments that were afterwards to take place upon the coming of the Messiah, there was then, in the *fulness of time*, two other sacraments substituted in their stead, viz. *Baptism*, and the *Supper of the Lord*. And these sacraments were both correspondent to the types by which they were represented.

As to the first, viz. circumcision, whether I consider the time of conferring it, or the end of its institution, I find it exactly answers to the sacrament of baptism in both these respects. For as the children under the Law were to be circumcised in their infancy, at *eight days old*; so are the children under the Gospel to be baptized in their infancy too. And as the principal thing intended in the rite of circumcision was to initiate or admit the children of the faithful into the Jewish church; so the chief design of baptism now is to admit the children of such as profess themselves Christians into the church of Christ. And for this reason, I believe, that as, under the Old Testament, children had the grant of covenant-privileges and church-membership as really as their parents had; so this grant was not repealed, as is intimated, Acts ii. 39. but farther confirmed in the New Testament, in that the Apostle calls the children of believing parents *holy*, 1 Cor. vii. 14. which cannot be understood of a real and inherent, but only of a relative and covenanted holiness, by virtue of which, being born of believing parents, themselves are accounted in the number of believers, and are therefore called holy children under the Gospel, in the same sense that the people of Israel were called a holy people under the Law,

Deut. vii. 6. and chap. xiv. 2, 21. as being all within the covenant of grace, which, through the faith of their parents, is thus sealed to them in their baptism.

Not that I think it necessary that all parents should be endued with what we call a *saving faith*, to entitle their children to these privileges, (for then, none but the children of such who have the Spirit of Christ truly implanted in them would be qualified to partake of the covenant;) but even such, who, by an outward historical faith, have taken the name of Christ upon them, are by that means in covenant with God, and so accounted holy in respect of their profession, whatever they may be in point of practice. And if they are themselves holy, it follows of course that their children must be so too, they being esteemed as parts of their parents, till made distinct members in the body of Christ; or, at least, till they come to the use of their reason, and the improvement of their natural abilities.

And therefore, though the seal be changed, yet the covenant-privileges, wherewith the parties stipulating unto God were before invested, are no whit altered or diminished; believer's children being as really confederates with their parents in the covenant of grace now, as they were before under the Jewish administration of it. And this seems to be altogether necessary; for otherwise, infants should be invested with privileges under the type, and be deprived of, or excluded from, them, under the more perfect accomplishment of the same covenant in the thing typified; and so, the dispensations of God's grace would be more straight and narrow since, than they were before, the coming of our Saviour; which I look upon to be no less than blasphemy to assert.

And upon this ground I believe it is as really the duty of Christians to baptize their children now, as ever it was the duty of the Israelites to circumcise theirs; and therefore St. Peter's question, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, who have receiv'd the Holy Ghost as well as we?* Acts x. 47. may very properly be applied to this case. Can any one forbid water that children should not be baptized, who are in covenant with the most high God as well as we? For what is it, I pray, that the right to baptism doth depend upon? Surely, not upon performing the conditions of the covenant; for then none should be baptized but such as are true believers in themselves, and known to be so by us, and, by consequence, none at all; it being only God's prerogative to search their hearts, and to know the truth of that grace which himself hath been pleased to bestow upon them. But

children's right to baptism is grounded upon the outward profession of their believing parents; so that as a king may be crowned in his cradle, not because he is able to wield the sceptre, or manage the affairs of his kingdom, but because he is heir to his father; so here, children are not therefore baptized because they are able to perform the conditions of the covenant which is sealed to them, but because they are children to believing parents. And this seems to be yet farther evident, from the very nature of seals, which are not administered or annexed to any covenant, because the conditions are already performed, but rather that they may be performed; and so children are not baptized, because they are already true Christians, but that they may be so hereafter.

As for a command for infant-baptism, I believe, that the same law that enjoined circumcision to the Jewish, enjoins baptism likewise to Christian children, there being the same reason for both. The reason why the Jewish children were to be circumcised was because they were Jewish children, born of such as professed the true worship of God, and were in covenant with him; and there is the same reason why Christian children are to be baptized, even because they are Christian children, born of such as profess the true worship of the same God, and are confederates in the same covenant with the Jews themselves. And as there is the same reason, so likewise the same end for both, viz. that the children might be actually admitted into the same covenant with their parents, and have it visibly confirmed to them by this initiating seal put upon them: so that circumcision and baptism are not two distinct seals, but the same seal diversely applied; the one being but as a type of the other, and so to give place to it whensoever, by the institution of Christ, it should be brought into the church of God. And therefore, the command for initiating children into the Church by baptism remains still in force, though circumcision, which was the type and shadow of it, be done away. And for this reason I believe, that was there never a command in the New Testament for infant-baptism, yet, seeing there is one for circumcision in the Old, and for baptism, as coming into the place of it, in the New, I should look upon baptism as necessarily to be applied to infants now, as circumcision was then.

But why should it be supposed that there is no command in the New Testament for infant-baptism? There are several texts that seem to imply its being practised in the first preaching of the Gospel, as particularly in the case of Lydia, and the keeper of the prison, Acts xvi. 15, 33. who had their

whole families baptized; and we no where find that children were excepted. On the contrary, St. Peter, exhorting the converted Jews to be baptized, makes use of this argument to bring them to it, *For the promise, says he, is unto you, and to your children*, Acts ii. 38, 39. which may as reasonably be understood of their infants, as of their adult posterity. But, besides, it was the express command of Christ to his disciples, that they should *go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, Matt. xxviii. 19. The meaning of which words I take to be this; Go ye, and preach the Gospel amongst all nations, and endeavour thereby to bring them over to the embracing of it; that leaving all Jewish ceremonies and Heathenish idolatries, they may profess my name, and become my disciples, receive the truth, and follow me; which if they do I charge you to *baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: for the word *μαθητεύσατε* doth not signify to *teach*, but to *make disciples*, denoting the same here, that *μαθητὰς ποιεῖν* doth upon the like occasion, John iv. 1.

And this is the sense that all the ancient translations agree in; nor, indeed, will the text itself bear any other; especially, not that of teaching; for though the apostles should have taught all nations, yet they were not presently to baptize them, unless they became disciples, and professors of the doctrine that they were taught. A man may be taught the doctrine of the Gospel, and yet not believe it; and even though he should believe, yet unless he openly professes his faith in it, he ought not presently to be baptized. For without this outward profession, the very possessing of Christ cannot entitle a man to this privilege before men, though it doth before God; because we cannot know how any one stands affected towards Christ, but only by his outward profession of him. It is the inward possession of Christ's person that entitles us to the inward spiritual grace; but it is the outward profession of his name only that entitles us to the outward visible sign in baptism; so that a man must of necessity be a professed disciple of the Gospel, before he can be admitted into the church of Christ. And hence it is that the words must necessarily be understood of discipling, or bringing the nations over to the profession of the Christian religion: or else we must suppose, what ought not to be granted, that our Saviour must command many that were visible enemies to his cross, to be received into his church; for many of the Jews were taught and instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel, who, notwithstanding, were inveterate enemies unto Christ. They were taught that he was the Messiah, and

Saviour of the world, and that *whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*; and they had all the reason in the world to be convinced of it: yet I hope there is none will say, that the bare knowledge of or tacit assent unto, these things are a sufficient ground for their reception into the church.

Now, as it was in the Jewish church, when any one became a proselyte, not only himself, but whatsoever children he afterwards had, were to be circumcised; so in the church of Christ, whensoever any person is brought over into the profession of the Christian religion, his seed are all equally invested with the outward privileges of it with himself, though they be not as yet come to years of discretion, nor able of themselves to make their profession of that religion they are to be received and baptized into. For so long as children are in their infancy, they are (as I before observed) looked upon as parts of their parents, and are therefore accounted holy, by the outward profession which their parents, under whom they are comprehended, make of it: and in this sense, 1 Cor. viii. 14. *the unbelieving husband is said to be sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband*; that is, man and wife being made one flesh, they are denominated, from the better part, holy, and so are their children too.

And hence it is that I verily believe, that in the commission which our Saviour gave to his Apostles, to disciple and *baptize all nations*, he meant that they should preach the Gospel in all nations, and thereby bring over all persons of understanding and discretion to the profession of his name, and in them their children; and so ingraft both root and branch into himself, the true vine, by baptizing both parents and children in the *name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*.

The main objection against this is, that infants are not in a capacity either to learn and understand their duty in this covenant, or to stipulate and promise for their future performance of the conditions of it. But this difficulty is easily removed, when I consider, that it is not by virtue of their own faith or knowledge, but that of their parents, that they are admitted to this sacrament; nor is it required that they should stipulate or promise in their own persons, but by their godfathers or sponsors, who enter into this engagement for them, and oblige them, when they come of age, to take it upon themselves, which accordingly they do. And this engagement by proxy does as effectually bind them to the performance of the conditions, as if they were actually in a capacity to have stipulated for themselves, or sealed the covenant in their own persons. For these

spiritual signs or seals are not designed to make God's word surer to us, but only to make our faith stronger in him; nor are they of the substance of the covenant, but only for the better confirmation of it.

And as baptism thus comes in the place of the Jews' circumcision, so doth our Lord's Supper answer to their passover. Their paschal lamb represented our Saviour Christ, and the sacrificing of it the shedding of his blood upon the cross; and as the passover was the memorial of the Israelites' redemption from Egypt's bondage, Exod. xii. 14. so is the Lord's Supper the memorial of our redemption from the slavery of sin, and ascension into Christian liberty: or rather, it is a solemn and lively representation of the death of Christ, and offering it again to God, as an atonement for sin, and reconciliation to his favour.

So that I believe this sacrament of the Lord's Supper, under the Gospel, succeeds to the rite of sacrificing under the Law, and is properly called the Christian sacrifice, as representing the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. And the end of both is the same: for as the sacrifices under the law were designed as a propitiation or atonement for sins, by transferring the punishment from the offerer to the thing offered, which is therefore called, *the accursed thing*, as we read Lev. xvii. 11. so, under the Gospel, we are told, that it was for this end that our Saviour died, and suffered in our stead, that he might obtain the pardon of our sins, and reconcile us to his Father, by laying the guilt of them upon his own person. And accordingly he says of himself, that *he came to give his life a ransom for many*, Matt. xx. 28. And St. Paul tells us, 2 Cor. v. 21. that *he was made sin for us, who knew no sin*.

And as the end of both institutions was the same, so they were both equally extended. The paschal lamb was offered for all the congregation of Israel; and so is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be administered to all the faithful people in Christ, that do not exclude themselves from it. And for this reason I believe, that as all the congregation of Israel was to eat the Passover, so is all the society of Christians to receive the Lord's Supper; those only to be excepted who are altogether ignorant of the nature of that covenant it seals, or openly and scandalously guilty of the breach of the conditions it requires.

But why, say some, should there be any exception? Did not Christ die for all mankind? And is not that death said to be *a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world?* All this is true; but it

does not from hence follow that all men must be actually saved and absolved from their sins by virtue of his death. No, it is only they who apply to themselves the merits of his passion, by partaking duly of this holy sacrament, which is the proper means by which these blessing are conveyed to us, *whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption*. I say duly, because though this sacrament was ordained for all, yet all will not make themselves worthy of it; and those that are not so, are so far from reaping any benefit from it, that, as the Apostle says, *they eat and drink their own damnation, not discerning the Lord's body*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. And therefore I believe, that as in the institution of the Passover there were some particular duties and ceremonies enjoined for the better solemnization of it; so there are some preparatory duties and qualifications necessarily required for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which before I presume to partake of it, I must always use my utmost endeavours to exercise myself in. And these are,

First, that I should examine, confess, and bewail my sins before God, with a true sense of, and sorrow for, them; and, taking firm resolutions for the time to come, utterly to relinquish and forsake them, solemnly engage myself in a new and truly Christian course of life.

Secondly, that I should *be in perfect charity with all men*, i. e. that I should heartily forgive those who have any ways injured or offended me; and make restitution or satisfaction to such whom I have in any respect injured or offended myself. And then,

Thirdly, that I should, with an humble and obedient heart, exercise the acts of faith, and love, and devotion, during the celebration of that holy mystery; and express the sense I have of this mystery, by devout praises and thanksgivings for the great mercies and favours that God vouchsafes to me therein; and by all the ways and measures of charity that he has prescribed, manifest my love and beneficence to my Christian brethren.

These are the proper graces, this the wedding garment, that every true Christian, who comes to be a guest at this holy Supper, ought to be clothed and invested with.

Do thou, O blessed Jesus! adorn me with this holy robe, and inspire my soul with such heavenly qualities and dispositions as these; and then I need not fear, but that *as oft as I eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood*, I shall effectually obtain the pardon and remission of my sins, the sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit, and a certain interest in the kingdom of glory!

See farther, *Treatise of the Sacrament*.

ARTICLE XI.

I believe, that, after a short separation, my soul and body shall be united together again, in order to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be finally sentenced according to my deserts.

I KNOW this body, which for the present I am tied to, is nothing else but a piece of clay, made up into the frame and fashion of a man ; and therefore, as it was first taken from the dust, so shall it return to dust again ; but then I believe, on the other hand, that it shall as really be raised from the earth, as ever it shall be carried to it ; yea, though perhaps it may go through a hundred or a thousand changes before that day come. There are, I confess, some points in this article, which are hardly to be solved by human reason ; but I believe there are none so difficult, but what may be reconciled by a divine faith ; though it be too hard for me to know, yet it is not too hard for God to do. He that should have told me some years ago that my body then was, or should be, a mixture of particles fetched from so many parts of the world, and undergo so many changes and alterations, as to become in a manner new, should scarce have extorted the belief of it from me, though now I perceive it to be a real truth ; the meats, fruits, and spices, which we eat, being transported from several different places and nations, and by natural digestion transfused into the constitution of the body. And why should not I believe, that the same almighty Power, who made these several beings, or particles of matter, by which I am fed and sustained, can as easily with his word recal each part again from the most secret or remote place that it can possibly be transported to ? Or, that he who framed me out of the dust, can with as much ease gather all the scattered parts of the body, and put them together again, as he at first formed it into such a shape, and infused into it a spiritual being ?

And this article of my faith I believe is not only grounded upon, but may, even by the force of reason, be deduced from, the principles of justice and equity ; justice requiring, that they who are copartners in vice and virtue, should be copartners also in punishments and rewards. There is scarce a sin a man commits, but his body hath a share in it ; for though the sin committed would not be a sin without the soul, yet it could not be committed without the body ; the sinfulness of it depends upon the former, but the commission of it may law-

fully be charged upon the latter : the body could not sin if the soul did not consent ; nor could the soul sin (especially so oft) if the body did not tempt to it. And this is particularly observable in the sins of adultery, drunkenness, and gluttony, which the soul of itself cannot commit, neither would it ever consent unto them, did not the prevalent humours of the body, as it were, force it to do so. For in these sins, the act that is sinful is wholly performed by the body, though the sinfulness of that act doth principally depend upon the soul.

Neither is the body only partner with the soul in these grosser sins, but even the more spiritual sins, which seem to be most abstracted from the temperature of the body, as if they depended only upon the pravity and corruption of the soul. I say, even these are partly to be ascribed to the body. For instance, an atheistical thought, which one would think was to be laid only upon the soul, because the thought takes its rise from thence ; yet if we seriously weigh and consider the matter, we shall find, that it is usually the sinful affections of the body that thus debauch the mind into these blasphemous thoughts ; and that it is the pleasures of sense that first suggest them to us, and raise them in us. And this appears, in that there is no person that ever was, or indeed ever can be, an atheist at all times ; but such thoughts spring up in the fountain of the soul only when mudded with fleshly pleasures. And thus it is in most other sins ; the carnal appetite having gotten the reins into its hand, it misleads the reason, and hurries the soul wheresoever it pleaseth. And what then can be more reasonable, than that the body should be punished, both for its usurping the soul's prerogative, and for its tyrannizing so much over that, which, at the first, it was made to be subject to ?

But farther, it is the body that enjoys the pleasure, and therefore good reason that the body should likewise bear the punishment of sin. Indeed, I cannot conceive how it can stand with the principles of justice, but that the body, which both accompanies the soul in sin, enjoys the pleasures of it, and leads the soul into it, should bear a share in the miseries which are due to, and inflicted upon, it. For what doth justice require, but to punish the person that offends for the offence he commits ? Whereas, if the soul only, and not the body, were to suffer, the person would not suffer at all ; the body being part of the person as well as the soul, and, therefore, the soul no person without the body.

Hence it is, that though the Scripture had been silent in this point, yet methinks I could not but have believed it : how

much more firm and stedfast then ought I to be in my faith, when truth itself hath been pleased so expressly to affirm it? For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise*, Isa. xxvi. 19. *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*, Dan. xii. 2. And thus saith the Saviour of the world, *who is the way, the truth, and the life; The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*, John v. 28, 29. The same hath it pleased his divine Majesty to assert and prove with his own mouth, Matth. xxii. 31, 32. and by his Spirit, 2 Cor. xv. and in many other places: from all which I may, with comfort and confidence, draw the same conclusion that holy Job did, and say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me*, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

And as I believe my body shall be thus raised from the grave, so I believe the other part of me, my soul, shall never be carried to it; I mean, it shall never die, but shall be as much, yea, more alive, when I am dying, than it is now; by so much my soul shall be the more active in itself, by how much it is less tied and subjected to the body.

And farther I believe, that so soon as ever my breath is out of my nostrils, my soul shall remove her lodging into the other world, there to live as really to eternity, as I now live here in time. Yea, I am more certain that my soul shall *return to God that gave it*, than that my body shall return to the earth, out of which I had it. For I know it is possible my body may be made immortal, but I am sure my soul shall never be mortal. I know, that at the first the body did equally participate of immortality with the soul, and that had not sin made the divorce, they had lived together, like loving mates, to all eternity. And I dare not affirm, that Enoch and Elias underwent the common fate; or, suppose they did, yet sure I am, the time will come, when thousands of men and women shall not be dissolved and die, but be immediately changed and caught up into heaven, or, to their eternal confusion, thrust down into hell; whose bodies therefore shall undergo no such thing as rotting in the grave, or being eaten up of worms, but, together with their souls, shall immediately launch into the

vast ocean of eternity. But who ever yet read or heard of a soul's funeral? who is it? where is the man? or, what is his name, that wrote the history of her life and death? Can any disease arise in a spiritual substance, wherein there is no such thing as contrariety of principles or qualities to occasion any disorder or distemper? Can any angel be sick, or die? And if not an angel, why a soul, which is endowed with the same spiritual nature here, and shall be adorned with the same eternal glory hereafter? No, no; deceive not thyself, my soul; for it is more certain that thou shalt always live, than that thy body shall ever die.

Not that I think my soul must always live, in despite of Omnipotence itself, as if it was not in the power of the Almighty to take my being and existence from me; for I know I am but as a potsherd in the Potter's hand, and that it is as easy for him to dash me to pieces now, as it was to raise me up at the first. I believe it is as easy for him to command my soul out of its being, as out of its body; and to send me back into my mother nothing, out of whose womb he took me, as it was at first to fetch me thence. I know he could do it if he would; but himself hath said he will not, and therefore I am sure he cannot do it; and that, not because he hath not power, but because he hath not will to do it; it being impossible for him to do that which he doth not will to do. And, that it is not his will or pleasure ever to annihilate my soul, I have it under his own hand, that my *dust shall return to the earth as it was, and my spirit to God that gave it*, Eccles. xii. 7. And if it return to God, it is so far from returning to nothing, that it returns to the Being of all beings; and so death to me will be nothing more than going home to my Father and Mother; my soul goes to my Father, God; and my body to my mother, Earth.

Thus likewise hath it pleased his sacred Majesty to assure me, that if our *earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. so clearly hath the great God brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. The light of nature shows, the soul can never perish or be dissolved, without the immediate interposition of God's omnipotence; and we have his own divine word for it, that he will never use that power in the dissolution of it. And therefore I may, with the greatest assurance, affirm and believe, that as really as I now live, so really shall I never die; but that my soul, at the very moment of its departure from the flesh, shall immediately mount up to the tribunal of the most

high God, there to be judged, first privately, by itself, (or perhaps with some other souls that shall be summoned to appear before God the same moment;) and then, from these private sessions, I believe that every soul that ever was, or shall be separated from the body, must either be received into the mansions of heaven, or else sent down to the dungeon of hell, there to remain till the grand assizes, the *judgment of the great day, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*, 1 Cor. xv. 52. And when our bodies, by the word of the Almighty God, shall be thus called together again, I believe that our souls shall be all prepared to meet them, and be united again to them, and so both *appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive sentence according to what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good or whether it be evil*. And though it is very difficult, or rather impossible, for me to conceive or determine the particular circumstances of this grand assize, or the manner and method how it shall be managed, yet, from the light and intimations that God has vouchsafed to give us of it, I have grounds to believe it will be ordered and carried on after this or the like manner.

The day and place being appointed by the King of kings, the glorious Majesty of heaven and Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, who long ago received his commission from the Father, to be the *Judge of quick and dead*, John v. 22. Acts xvii. 31. *shall descend from heaven with the shout of the archangel, and with the trump of God*, 1 Thess. iv. 16. royally attended with an innumerable company of *glorious angels*, Matt. xxv. 31. These he shall send with the great sound of a trumpet, and they *shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other*, chap. xxiv. 31. yea, and the wicked too, from whatsoever place they shall be in; and then shall he *sever the wicked from the just*, Matt. xiii. 49. So that all nations, and every particular person, that ever did, or ever shall, live upon the face of the earth, shall be gathered together before him, and he shall *separate the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats upon the left*, Matt. xxv. 32. 33.

Things being thus set in order, the Judge shall read his commission, *i. e.* declare and manifest himself to be the Judge of all the earth, sent by the God of heaven, to judge them that had condemned him, and in that very body, that once was crucified upon the cross at Jerusalem for our sins. So that all the world shall then behold him shining in all his glory and

majesty, and shall acknowledge him to be now, what they would not believe him to be before, even both God and man, and so the Judge of all the world, from whom there can be no appeal.

And having thus declared his commission, I believe the first work he will go upon will be to open the book of God's remembrance, and to cause all the indictments to be read that are there found on record against those on his right hand; but behold, all the black lines of their sins being blotted out with the red lines of their Saviour's blood, and nothing but their good works, their prayers, their sermons, their meditations, their alms, and the like, to be found there; the righteous Judge, before whom they stand, turning himself towards them, with a serene and smiling countenance, will declare to them, before all the world, that their sins are pardoned, and their persons accepted by him, as having believed in him; and, therefore, will he immediately proceed to pronounce the happy sentence of election upon them, saying, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

The sentence being thus pronounced, the righteous (and I hope myself among the rest) shall go up with shouts of joy and triumph, to sit with our blessed Redeemer, to judge the other parts of the world, who stand at the left hand of the tribunal, with ghastly countenances and trembling hearts, to receive their last and dreadful doom. Against these, all the sins that ever they committed, or were guilty of, shall be brought up in judgment against them, as they are found on record in the book of God's remembrance, and the indictment read against every particular person, high or low, for every particular sin, great or small, which they have committed.

And the truth of this indictment shall be attested by their own consciences, crying, *Guilty, guilty*: I say, by their own consciences, which are as a thousand witnesses; yea, and by the omniscience of God too, which is as a thousand consciences. And, therefore, without any farther delay, shall the Judge proceed to pronounce the sentence, the doleful sentence of condemnation upon them, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.*

This, I believe, or such like, will be the method of Christ's proceeding with us in that great and terrible day of trial and retribution.

Oh! may these awful thoughts and ideas of it always accompany me, and strike such a deep and lively impression upon my heart, in every action of life, as to deter me from

offending this just and almighty Being, in whose power it is to *destroy both body and soul in hell*; and engage me in such a regular, strict, and conscientious course of life, as to be always ready, whenever he shall please to summon me, to give in my accounts at the grand audit, and, with a holy assurance, fly for mercy and succour into the hands of my Redeemer, and be permitted to *enter into the joys of his rest!*

ARTICLE XII.

I believe there are two other worlds, besides this I live in; a world of misery for unrepenting sinners, and a world of glory for believing saints.

WHEN death hath opened the cage of flesh, wherein the soul is penned up, whither it flies, or how it subsists, I think it not easy to determine, or indeed to conceive. As for the Platonic aerial and ætherial vehicles, succeeding this terrestrial one, I find neither mention of nor warrant for them in the word of God. And, indeed, to suppose that a spiritual substance cannot subsist of itself, without being supported by a corporeal vehicle, is, in my opinion, too gross a conceit for any philosopher, much more for one that professes himself a divine, to advance or entertain. Only this I am sure of, that according to the distinction of lives here into good or bad, and the sentences passed upon all hereafter, of absolution or condemnation, there will be a twofold receptacle for the souls of men, the one of happiness, the other of misery.

As to the first, I believe, that at the great and general as-sizes of the world, there will be a glorious entrance opened for the righteous into the holy of holies, the seat and fountain of all bliss and happiness, where they shall draw nigh to the most high God, *behold his presence in righteousness*, and reign with him for ever in glory, where they shall see him *face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *and know him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent*, John xvii. 3. And this knowing and beholding God face to face is, I believe, the very heaven of heavens, even the highest happiness that it is possible a creature should be made capable of: for in having a perfect knowledge of God, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all things that ever were, are, shall, yea, or can be, in the world. For God being the Being of all beings, in seeing him, we shall not only see whatsoever hath been, but whatsoever can be com-

municated from him. The contemplation of which cannot but ravish and transport my spirit beyond itself; especially when I consider, that in knowing this one-all-things, God, I cannot but enjoy whatsoever it is possible any creature should enjoy. For the knowing of a thing is the soul's enjoyment of it; the understanding being to the soul, what the senses are to the body. And, therefore, as the body enjoys nothing but by its senses, so neither doth the soul enjoy any thing but by its understanding: and, as the body is said to have whatsoever affects its proper senses, so may the soul be said to have whatsoever comes under its knowledge. Nay, the soul so far hath what it knows, that in a manner it is what it knows; itself being in a spiritual manner enlarged, according to the extent of the objects which it knows, as the body is by the meat it eats; the truths we know turning into the substance of our souls, as the meat we eat doth into the substance of our bodies.

But oh! what a rare soul shall I then have, when it shall be extended to every thing that ever was, or ever could have been! What a happy creature shall I then be, when I shall know, and so enjoy him that is all things in himself! What can a creature desire more! yea, what more can a creature be made capable of enjoying or desiring! And that which will always accompany this our knowledge and enjoyment, is perfect love to what we enjoy and know, without which we should take pleasure in nothing, though we should have all things to take pleasure in. But, who will be able not to love the chiefest good, that knows and enjoys him, and therefore enjoys him because he knows him? Questionless, in heaven, as I shall enjoy whatsoever I can love, so shall I love whatsoever I enjoy. And this, therefore, I believe to be the perfection of my happiness, and the happiness of my perfection, in the other world; that I shall perfectly know and love, and so perfectly enjoy and rejoice in, the most high God; and shall be, as known, so perfectly loved and rejoiced in by him. And, questionless, for all our shallow apprehensions and low estimations of these things now, they cannot choose but be vast and inconceivable pleasures, too great for any creature to enjoy whilst here below.

If we have but the least drop of these pleasures distilled into us here upon earth, how strangely do they make us, as it were besides ourselves, by lifting us above ourselves! If we can but at any time get a glimpse of God, and of his love to us, how are we immediately carried beyond all other pleasures and contentments whatsoever! How apt are we to say, with

Peter, *It is good for us to be here!* And, if the foretastes of the blessings of Canaan, if the dark intimations of God's love to us, be so unspeakably pleasant, so ravishingly delightful; oh! what will the full possession of him be! What transporting ecstasies of love and joy shall those blessed souls be possessed with, who shall behold the King of glory smiling upon them, rejoicing over them, and shining forth in all his love and glory upon them! Oh! what astonishing beauty will they then behold! What flowing, what refreshing pleasures, shall then solace and delight their spirits, unto all eternity! Pleasures, far greater than I am able either to express or conceive, much less to enjoy, on this side heaven! My faculties are now too narrow and scanty for such an entertainment; and, therefore, till they are spiritualized and enlarged, they cannot receive it. This is the portion only of another world, this the *crown of righteousness*, which the *Lord the righteous Judge* reserves in heaven for me, and which, at his second coming, he has promised to bestow upon me, and not upon me only, but *upon all them also that love his appearing!*

As to the other state, viz. that of the wicked in another life, I believe it will be as exquisitely miserable and wretched, as that of the righteous is happy and glorious: they will *be driven for ever from the presence of the Lord*, from those bright and blessed regions above, *where Christ sits at the right hand of God*, to those dark and dismal dungeons below, where the devil and his angels are for ever doomed to be tormented.

What sort of torments or punishments they are there to undergo, I am as unable to express, as I am unwilling ever to experience; but, according to the notions which Scripture and reason give me of these matters, I believe they will be twofold, viz. 1. privative, and, 2. positive; i. e. the wicked will not only be deprived of all that is good and happy, but actually condemned to all that is evil and miserable; and that in the most transcendent degree.

The first part of their punishment will consist in envious, melancholy, and self-condemning, reflections upon their having defeated and deprived themselves not only of their carnal mirth and sensual enjoyments, their friends, fortunes, and estates in this world, but also of all the infinite joys and glories of the next, the presence of God, the society of saints and angels, and all the refreshing and ravishing delights which flow from the fruition of the chiefest good: and what adds yet farther to their anguish and remorse is, that they have lost the very hopes of ever regaining any of these enjoyments!

Oh! how infinitely tormenting and vexatious must such a

condition be, which at once gives them a view both of the greatest happiness, and the greatest misery, without the least hopes either of recovering the one, or being delivered from the other! How must they tear, torment, and curse themselves, for their former follies; and, too late, wish that they had been stifled in the womb, or drowned in the font which was to be their second birth!

And, if the bare privation of heaven and happiness be so miserable and tormenting, how will it rack their consciences, and fill their souls with horror and amazement, to behold the eternal God, the glorious Jehovah, in the fierceness of his wrath, continually threatening to pour out his vengeance upon them! How much more, when he positively consigns them over to the power of the devil, to execute his judgment in full measure! when they are gnawed upon by the worm of their own consciences, feel the wrath of the Almighty flaming in their hearts, and fire and brimstone their continual torture! And all this, without the least allay or mixture of refreshment, or the least hopes of ending or cessation!

In a word when they have nothing else to expect but misery for their portion, weeping and wailing for their constant employment, and the devil and damned fiends their only companions to all eternity! And this is that world of misery, which all that will not be persuaded to believe in Christ here, must be doomed for ever to live in hereafter!

I know, the subjects of this article were never the objects of my sight, though they are of my faith. I never yet saw heaven or hell, the places I am now speaking of; but why should my faith be staggered or diminished because of that? I never saw Rome or Constantinople; I never saw the flaming Sicilian hill *Ætna*; yet I can believe there is such a burning mountain, and such glorious cities; because others, who have been there, have told me so; and faithful writers have related and described them to me. And shall I believe my fellow worms, and not my great Creator, who is truth itself? What though I never did see the new Jerusalem that is above, nor the flaming Tophet that is below; yet, since God himself hath both related and described them to me, why should I doubt of them? Why should not I a thousand times sooner believe them to be, than if I had seen them with mine own eyes? I cannot so much believe that I have now a pen in my hand, have a book before me, and am writing in it, as I do and ought to believe, that I shall one day, and that ere long, be either in heaven, or in hell; in the height of happiness or in the depth of misery.

I know my senses are fallible, and therefore may deceive me ; but my God, I am sure cannot. And therefore, let others raise doubts and scruples as they please, I am as fully satisfied and convinced of the truth of this article as any of the rest.

Do thou, O my God, keep me stedfast in this faith, and give me grace so to fit and prepare myself to appear before thee in the white robes of purity and holiness in another world, that whenever my dissolution comes, I may cheerfully resign my spirit into the hands of my Creator and Redeemer ; and, from this crazy house of clay, take my flight into the mansions of glory, *where Christ sits at the right hand of God* ; and with the joyful choir of saints and angels, and the blessed spirits of *just men made perfect*, chant forth thy praises to all eternity !

RESOLUTIONS

FORMED FROM THE FOREGOING

ARTICLES.

AS obedience without faith is impossible, so faith without obedience is vain and unprofitable ; *for as the body*, says St. James, *without the spirit is dead, so faith without good works is dead also*, James ii. 26. Having therefore, I hope, laid a sure foundation, by resolving what and how to believe, I shall now, by the grace of God, resolve so to order my conversation, in all circumstances and conditions of life, as to raise a good superstructure upon it, and to finish the work God has given me to do, i. e. so to love and please God in this world, as to enjoy and be happy with him for ever in the next. And it is absolutely necessary that I should be speedy and serious in these resolutions ; especially when I reflect with myself, how much of my time I have already spent upon the vanities and follies of youth, and how much enhanced and increased this work, by acquired guilt, by settled and repeated habits of sin, which are not without great difficulty to be atoned for and removed. My heart, alas ! is now more hardened in iniquity, more puffed with pride, and more averse from God, than when I first entered into covenant with him : and I have added many actual sins and provocations to my original guilt and pollution ; instead of glorifying God, I have dishonoured him ; and instead of working out my own salvation, I have taken a pleasure and delight in such things as would, in the end, be my ruin and destruction. So that before I can be able to make any progress in the duties of religion, or walk in the paths that lead to life, I must first be freed and disentangled from these weights and incumbrances that clog and retard me in my spiritual course ; I must have my heart cleansed and softened, humbled and converted to God, and all my transgressions purged and pardoned by the merits of my Redeemer.

And then, being fully persuaded that there is no way for me to come to the joys of heaven, but by walking according to the strictest rules of holiness upon earth, I must endeavour for the future, by a thorough change and reformation of my life, to act in conformity to the divine will and pleasure in all things, and *perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord*; for the Most High has told me in his word, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*.

In order, therefore, to qualify myself for this happiness, it will be necessary for me to settle firm and steady resolutions to fulfil my duty, in all the several branches of it, to God, my neighbour, and myself; and to take care these resolutions be put in practice, according to the following method.

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved by the grace of God, to walk by rule; and therefore think it necessary to resolve upon rules to walk by.

AND this the rather, because I perceive the want of such rules has been the occasion of all or most of my miscarriages. For what other reason can I assign to myself for having trifled and sinned away so much time, as I have done in my younger years, but because I did not thoroughly resolve to spend it better? What is the reason I have hitherto lived so unserviceably to God, so unprofitably to others, and so sinfully against my own soul, but because I did not apply myself with that sincerity of resolution, diligence, and circumspection, as a wise man ought to have done, to discharge my duty in these particulars? I have, indeed, often resolved to bid adieu to my sins and follies, and enter upon a new course of life; but these resolutions being not rightly formed upon steady principles, the first temptation made way for a relapse, and the same bait that first allured me has no sooner been thrown in my way, but I have been as ready to catch at it again, and as greedy to swallow it, as ever. At other times again I have acted without any thought or resolution at all; and then, though some of my actions might be good in themselves, yet, being done by chance, without any true design or intention, they could not be imputed to me as good, but rather the quite contrary: so that in this respect the want of resolution has not only been the occasion of my sinful actions, but the corruption of my good ones too. And shall I still go on in this same

loose and careless manner as I have formerly done? No, I now resolve with myself, in the presence of the most high and eternal God, not only in general to walk by rule, but to fix the rule I design to walk by; so that in all my thoughts, and words, and actions, in all places, companies, relations, and conditions, I may still have a sure guide at hand to direct me, such a one as I can safely depend upon, without any danger of being deceived or misled, *i. e.* the holy Scriptures. And therefore,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to make the divine word the rule of all the rules I propose to myself.

As the will of God is the rule and measure of all that is good, so there is nothing deserves that name but what is agreeable and conformable thereto: and this will being fully revealed and contained in the holy Scripture, it will be necessary for me, in directing my course over the ocean of this world, that I should fix my eye continually upon this star, steer by this compass, and make it the only land-mark, by which I am to be guided to my wished-for haven. I must not, therefore, have recourse to the inward workings of my own roving fancy, or the corrupt dictates of my own carnal reason: these are but blind guides, and will certainly lead me into the ditch of error, heresy, and irreligion, which, in these our self-admiring days, so many poor souls have been plunged in. Alas! how many hath the impetuous torrent of blind zeal and erroneous conscience borne down into a will-worship, and voluntary subjection of themselves to the spurious offspring of their own deluded fancies! If the light that is within them doth but dictate any thing to be done; or rather, if the whimsey doth but take them, that they must do thus or thus, they presently set about it, without ever consulting the sacred writings, to see whether it is acceptable to God, or displeasing to him. Whereas, for my own part, I know not how any thing should be worthy of God's accepting, that is not of God's commanding. I am sure, the word of God is the good old way that will certainly bring me to my Father's house; for how should that way but lead me to heaven, which truth itself has chalked out for me? Not as if it was necessary, that every one of my resolutions should be contained, word for word, in the holy Scriptures; it is suffi-

cient that they be implied in, and agreeable thereto. So that though the manner of my expressions may not be found in the word of God, yet the matter of my resolutions may clearly be drawn from thence. But let me dive a little into the depth of my sinful heart! What is the reason of my thus resolving upon such an exact conformity to the will and word of God? Is it to work my way to heaven with mine own hands? to purchase an inheritance in the land of Canaan with the price of my own holiness and religion? or to swim over the ocean of this world into the haven of happiness, upon the empty bladders of my own resolutions? No:

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, that as I am not able to think or do any thing that is good, without the influence of the divine grace; so I will not pretend to merit any favour from God, upon account of any thing I do for his glory and service.

AND indeed, I may very well put this resolution amongst the rest; for should I resolve to perform my resolutions by mine own strength, I might as well resolve never to perform them at all: for truth itself, and mine own woful experience, hath convinced me, that I am not able of myself so much as to think a good thought, and how then shall I be able of myself to resolve upon rules of holiness, according to the word of God, or to order my conversation according to these resolutions, without the concurrence of the divine grace? Alas! should the great God be pleased to leave me to myself, to resolve upon what is agreeable to my corrupt nature, what strange kind of resolution should I make? What should I resolve upon? Certainly, only nothing but to gratify my carnal appetite with sensual and sinful pleasures, to indulge myself in riot and excess, to spend my time, and ravel out my parts and talents, in the revels of sin and vanity. But now to *live holily, righteously, and godlily in this present world*, to deny my own, that I may fulfil the will of God; alas! such resolutions as these would never so much as come into my thoughts, much less would they discover themselves in my outward conversation.

But, suppose I should be able to make good resolutions, and fulfil them exactly in my life and actions; yet, what should I do more than my duty? And what should I be esteemed of for doing that? Alas! this is so far from puffing me up, that I am

verily persuaded, should I spend all my time, my parts, my strength, my gifts, for God, and all my estate upon the poor ; should I *water my couch continually with my tears*, and fast my body into a skeleton ; should I employ each moment of my life in the immediate worship of my glorious Creator, so that all my actions, from my birth to my death, should be but one continued act of holiness and obedience ; in a word, should I live like an angel in heaven, and die like a saint on earth, yet I know no truer, nor should I desire any better epitaph to be engraven upon my tomb than this, *Here lies an unprofitable servant*. No, no ; it is Christ, and Christ alone, that my soul must support itself upon. It is holiness, indeed, that is the way to heaven ; but there is none, none but Christ can lead me to it. As the worst of my sins are pardonable by Christ, so are the best of my duties damnable without him.

But if so, then whither tend my resolutions ? Why so strict, so circumspect a conversation ? Why, it is to justify that faith before others, and mine own conscience, which, I hope, through Christ, shall justify my soul before God. And I believe farther, that the holier I live here, the happier I shall live hereafter ; for though I shall not be saved for my works, yet I believe I shall be saved according to them. And thus, as I dare not expect to be saved by the performance of my resolutions, without Christ's merit, so neither do I ever expect to be enabled to perform my resolutions, without his Spirit assisting me therein.

No ; it is thyself, my God and my guide, that I wholly and solely depend upon ! Oh ! for thine own name's sake, for thy Son's sake, and for thy promise sake, do thou both make me to know what thou wouldest have me to do, and then help me to do what thou wouldest have me to know ! Teach me first what to resolve upon, and then enable me to perform my resolutions ; that I may walk with thee in the ways of holiness here, and rest with thee in the joys of happiness hereafter !



CONCERNING MY CONVERSATION IN GENERAL.

HAVING thus far determined in general to form resolutions for the better regulating of my life, I must now descend to particulars, and settle some rules with myself, to resolve my future life and conversation wholly into holiness and religion. I know this is a hard task to do ; but I am sure it is no more than what my God and my Father has set me :

why, therefore, should I think much to do it? Shall I grudge to spend my life for him, who did not grudge to spend his own blood for me? Shall not I so live, that he may be glorified on earth, who died, that I might be glorified in heaven? Especially considering, that if my whole life could be sublimated into holiness, and moulded into an exact conformity unto the will of the Most High, I should be happy beyond expression? Oh! what a heaven should I then live on earth! what ravishments of love and joy would my soul be continually possessed with! Well, I am resolved, by the grace of God, to try; and to that end do, this morning, wholly sequester and set myself apart for God, resolving, by the assistance of his grace, to make all and every thought, word, and action, to pay their tribute unto him. Let this man mind his profit, a second his pleasures, a third his honours, a fourth himself, and all their sins; I am resolved to mind and serve my God, so as to make him the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last of my whole life. And, that I may always have an exact copy before me, to write and frame every letter of this my life by,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to make Christ the pattern of my life here, that so Christ may be the portion of my soul hereafter.

LET the whole world go whither it will, I am resolved to walk in the steps that my Saviour went in before me: I shall endeavour, in all places I come into, in all companies I converse with, in all the duties I undertake, in all the miseries I undergo, still to behave myself as my Saviour would do, was he in my place. So that wheresoever I am, or whatsoever I am about, I shall still put this question to myself, Would my Saviour go hither? Would he do this or that? And, every morning, consider with myself, Suppose my Saviour was in my stead, had my business to do, how would he demean himself this day? How meek and lowly would he be in his carriage and deportment? How circumspect in his walking? How savoury in his discourse? How heavenly in all, even his earthly employments? Well; and I am resolved, by strength from himself, to follow him as near as possible. I know, I can never hope perfectly to transcribe his copy, but I must endeavour to imitate it in the best manner I can, that so by doing as he

did in time, I may be where he is to all eternity. But, alas! his life was spiritual, and *I am carnal, sold under sin*; and every petty object that doth but please my senses, will be apt to divert and draw away my soul from following his steps. In order, therefore, to prevent this,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to walk by faith, and not by sight, on earth, that so I may live by sight, and not by faith, in heaven.

AND truly, this resolution is so necessary to the performance of all the rest, that without it I can do nothing, with it I can do every thing that is required. The reason why I am so much taken with the garnish and seeming beauty of this world's vanities, so as to step out of the road of holiness to catch at, or delight myself in them, is only because I look upon them with an eye of sense. For could I behold every thing with the eye of faith, I should judge of them not as they seem to me, but as they are in themselves, *vanity and vexation of spirit*. For faith has a quick and piercing eye, that can look through the outward superficies, into the inward essence of things. It can look through the pleasing bait to the hidden hook, view the sting, as well as the honey, the everlasting punishment, as well as the temporal contentment there is in sin. It is, as the Apostle very well defines it, *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. It is *the substance* of whatsoever is promised by God to me, or expected by me from him: so that, by faith, whatsoever I hope for in heaven, I may have the substance of upon earth: and it is *the evidence of things not seen*, the presence of what is absent, the clear demonstration of what would otherwise seem impossible; so that I can clearly discern, as through a prospective, hidden things, and things afar off, as if they were open, and just at hand. I can look into the deepest mysteries, as fully revealed, and see heaven and eternity as just ready to receive me.

And, oh! could I but always look through this glass, and be constantly upon the mount, taking a view of the land of Canaan, what dreams and shadows would all things here below appear to be? Well; by the grace of God, I am resolved no longer to tie myself to sense and sight, the sordid and trifling affairs of this life, but always to walk as one of the

other world, to behave myself in all places, and at all times, as one already possessed of my inheritance, and an inhabitant of the new Jerusalem: by faith assuring myself, I have but a few more days to live below, a little more work to do, and then I shall lay aside my glass, and be admitted to a nearer vision and fruition of God, and *see him face to face*.

By this means, I shall always live, as if I was daily to die; always speak, as if my tongue, the next moment, were to cleave to the roof of my mouth; and continually order my thoughts and affections in such a manner, as if my soul were just ready to depart, and take its flight into the other world. By this means, whatsoever place I am in, or whatsoever work I am about, I shall still be with my God, and demean myself so, as if, with St. Jerome, I heard the voice of the trumpet crying out, *Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment*.

And thus, though I am at present here in the flesh, yet I shall look upon myself as more really an inhabitant of heaven, than I am upon earth. Here I am but as a pilgrim or sojourner, that has no abiding city; but there I have a sure and everlasting inheritance, which Christ has purchased and prepared for me, and which faith has given me the possession of. And, therefore, as it is my duty, so will I constantly make it my endeavour, to live up to the character of a true Christian, whose portion and conversation is in heaven, and think it a disgrace and disparagement to my profession, to stoop to, or entangle myself with, such toys and trifles, as the men of the world busy themselves about; or to feed upon husks, with swine, here below, when it is in my power, by faith, to be continually supplied with spiritual manna from heaven, till at last I am admitted to it. And that I may awe my spirit into the performance of these, and all other my resolutions,

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved by the grace of God, always to be looking upon God, as always looking upon me.

WHERESOEVER I am, or whatsoever I am a doing, I must still consider the eye of the great God as directly intent upon me, viewing and observing all my thoughts, words, and actions, and writing them down in the book of his remembrance; and that all these, unless they be washed out with the tears of repentance, and crossed with the blood of my cruci-

fied Saviour, must still remain on record, and be brought in judgment against me at the great day. That, therefore, I may always behave myself as in his presence, it behoves me thoroughly to consider, and be persuaded, not only that my outward man, but even all the secret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my soul, all the several windings and turnings of my heart, are exactly known and manifest, as anatomized before him. He knows what I am now a thinking, doing, and writing, as well as I do myself; yea, he sees every word whilst it is in my heart, before it be brought forth and set down. He knows all the resolutions I have made, and how often, poor creature! I have broken them already, since I made them.

Upon this consideration, I resolve to stand my ground against all temptations; and whenever I find myself in danger to be drawn aside by them, to oppose the bent of my corrupt affections by these or the like questions: Am I really in the presence of the Almighty, the great Lord of heaven and earth, and shall I presume to affront him to his face, by doing such things as I know are odious and displeasing to him? I would not commit adultery in the sight of my fellow-creatures, and shall I do it in the presence of the glorious Jehovah? I would not steal in the sight of an earthly judge, and shall I do it before the Judge of all the world? If fear and shame from men have such an influence upon me, as to deter me from the commission of sin, how ought I to be moved with the apprehension of God's inspection, who does not only know my transgressions, but will eternally punish me for them?

May these thoughts and considerations always take place in my heart, and be accompanied with such happy effects in my conversation, that I may live with God upon earth, and so love and fear his presence in this world, that I may forever enjoy his glory in the next!

CONCERNING MY THOUGHTS.

BUT who am I, poor, proud, sinful dust and ashes, that I should expect ever to live so holy, so heavenly, as is here supposed! *Can grapes be gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?* Can the fruit be sweet, when the root is bitter? or the streams healthful, when the fountain is poisoned? No; I must either get me a new and better heart, or else it will be impossible for me ever to lead a new and better life. But how must

I come by this pearl of inestimable value, a new heart? Can I purchase it with my own riches? or find it in my own field? Can I raise it from sin to holiness? from earth to heaven? or from myself to God? Alas! I have endeavoured it, but I find, by woeful experience, I cannot attain to it: I have been lifting and heaving again and again, to raise it out of the mire and clay of sin and corruption; but, alas! it will not stir: I have rubbed and chafed it with one threatening after another, and all to get heat and life into it; but still it is as cold and dead as ever: I have brought it to the promises, and set it under the droppings of the sanctuary; I have shown it the beauty of Christ, and the deformity of sin; but yet it is a hard and sinful, an earthly and sensual heart still. What, therefore, shall I do with it? O my God, I bring it unto thee! Thou that madest it a heart at first, canst only make it a new heart now! O do thou purify and refine it, and *renew a right spirit within me!* Do thou take it into thy hands, and, out of thine infinite goodness, new mould it up, by thine own grace, into an exact conformity to thine own will! Do thou but give me a new heart, and I shall promise thee, by thy grace, to lead a new life, and become a new creature! Do thou but clear the fountain, and I shall endeavour to look to the streams that flow from it! which that I may be able to do, with the better success,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to watch as much over the inward motions of my heart, as the outward actions of my life.

For my heart, I perceive, is the womb, in which all sin is first conceived, and from which, my Saviour tells me, *proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness*, Mark vii. 21, 22. So that, as ever I would prevent the commission of these sins in my life, I must endeavour to hinder their conception in my heart, following the wise man's counsel, to *keep my heart with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life*, Prov. iv. 23. Neither is this the only reason why I should set so strict a watch over my heart, because sinful thoughts lead to sinful acts; but because the thoughts themselves are sinful, yea, the very first-born of ini-

quity ; which though men cannot pry into or discover, yet the all-seeing God knows and observes, and remembers them, as well as the greatest actions of all my life. And oh ! what wicked and profane thoughts have I formerly entertained, not only against God, but against Christ, by questioning the justice of his laws, and doubting of the truth of his revelation, so as to make both his life and death of none effect to me ! Which that they may never be laid to my charge hereafter, I humbly beseech God to pardon and absolve me from them, and to give me grace, for the remainder of my life, to be as careful of thinking, as of doing well, and as fearful of offending him in my heart, as of transgressing his laws in my life and conversation. To this end,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to stop every thought at its first entering into my heart, and to examine it whence it comes, and whither it tends.

So soon as ever any new thought begins to bubble in my soul, I am resolved to examine, what stamp it is of, whether it spring from the pure fountain of living waters, or the polluted streams of my own affections ; as also, which way it tends, or takes its course, towards the ocean of happiness, or the pit of destruction. And the reason of this my resolution, I draw from the experience I have had of the devil's temptations, and the working of my own corruptions ; by which I find, that there is no sin I am betrayed into, but what takes its rise from my inward thoughts. These are the tempters that first present some pleasing object to my view, and then bias my understanding, and pervert my will, to comply with the suggestions. So that, though the Spirit of God is pleased to dart a beam into my heart at the same time, and shew me the odious and dangerous effects of such thoughts ; yet, I know not how or why, I find a prevailing suggestion within, that tells me, it is but a thought, and that so long as it goes no farther, it cannot do me much hurt. Under this specious colour and pretence, I secretly persuade myself to dwell a little longer upon it ; and finding my heart pleased and delighted with its natural issue, I give it a little farther indulgence, till, at last, my desire breaks out into a flame, and will be satisfied with nothing less than the enjoyment of the object it is exercised upon. And what water

can quench such a raging fire, as is thus kindled by the devil, and blown up by the bellows of my own inordinate affections, which the more I think of, the more I increase the flame? How nearly, therefore, does it concern me to take up this resolution of setting a constant watch and guard at the door of my heart, that nothing may enter in without a strict examination? Not as if I could examine every particular thought that arises in my heart, for by that means I should do nothing else but examine my thoughts without intermission. But this I must do; whensoever I find any thought that bears the face or appearance of sin, I must throw it aside, with the utmost abhorrence: and when it comes in disguise, as the devil under Samuel's mantle, or when it is a thought I never conceived before, and know not but it may be bad, as well as good; then, before I suffer it to settle upon my spirits, I must examine, as well as I can, whether it be sent from heaven or hell, and what message it comes about, and what will be the issue of it. And thus, by the divine assistance, I shall let nothing into my heart, but what will bring me nearer to my God, and set me at a greater distance from the evil and punishment of sin. Neither do I think it my duty only to be so watchful against such thoughts as are in themselves sinful; but,

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be as fearful to let in vain, as careful to keep out sinful thoughts.

I do not look upon vain thoughts as only tending to sin, but as in themselves sinful; for that which makes sin to be sin, is the want of conformity to the will of God; and that vain thoughts are not conformable and agreeable to the divine will, appears in that God himself, by the mouth of his royal prophet, expressly saith, *I hate vain thoughts*, Psalm cxix. 113. Again, vain thoughts are therefore sinful, because they have in them nothing that can denominate them good: for as, in a moral sense, there is never a particular individual act, so neither is there any particular thought, but what is either good or bad, in some respect or other. There is not a moment of my life, but it is my duty either to be thinking, or speaking, or doing good; so that whensoever I am not thus employed, I come short of my duty, and, by consequence, am guilty of sin.

But what are these vain thoughts I am thus resolving against?

Why, all wanderings and distractions in prayer, or in hearing the word of God ; all useless, trifling, and impertinent thoughts, that do not belong to, nor further, the work I am about, the grand affair of my salvation, may properly be called vain thoughts. And, alas ! what swarms of these are continually crowding into my heart ? How have I thought away whole hours together, about I know not what chimeras, whereof one scarce ever depends upon another : sometimes entertaining myself with the pleasures of sense, as eating and drinking, and such-like earthly enjoyments ; sometimes building castles in the air, and clambering up to the pinnacle of wealth and honour, which I am not half way got up to, but down I fall again into a fool's paradise !

Or, if I chance, at any time, to think a good while upon one thing, it is just to as much purpose as the man's thoughts were, which I have sometimes heard of, and smiled at, who having an egg in his hand, by a sort of chimerical climax, improved it into an estate ; but while he was thus pleasing himself with these imaginary products, down dropped the egg, and all his hens, and cattle, and house, and land, that he had raised from it, vanished in the fall. These and such like are the vain thoughts that I must, for the future, endeavour to avoid ; and though it will be impossible for me wholly to prevent their first entering into my mind, yet I resolve, by the grace of God, not to harbour or dwell upon, or delight myself in them. And then, notwithstanding they are in some sense sinful, yet they will not be imputed to me as such, provided I use my utmost endeavours to avoid them. Which that I may be the better able to do,

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be always exercising my thoughts upon good objects, that the devil may not exercise them upon bad.

THE soul, being a spiritual substance is always in action, and its proper and immediate act is thinking, which is as natural and proper to the soul, as extension is to the body : it is that upon which all the other actions of the soul are grounded ; so that neither our apprehensions of, nor affections to, any object, can be acted without it. And hence it is, that I think the soul is very properly defined, *substantia cogitans*, a thinking substance ; for there is nothing else but a spirit can think,

and there is no spirit but always doth think. And this I find, by experience, to be so true and certain, that if at any time I have endeavoured to think of nothing, (as I have sometimes done,) I have spent all the time in thinking upon that very thought.

How much, therefore, doth it concern me to keep my soul in continual exercise upon what is good? for be sure, if I do not set it on work, the devil will; and if it do not work for God, it will work for him: I know, sinful objects are more agreeable to a sinful soul; but I am, sure, holy thoughts are more conformable to a holy God. Why therefore should I spend and ravel out my thoughts upon that which will destroy my soul? No, no; I shall henceforth endeavour always to be employing my thoughts upon something that is good, and therefore to have good subjects constantly at hand to think upon; (as the attributes of God, the glory of heaven, the misery of hell, the merits of Christ, the corruption of my nature, the sinfulness of sin, the beauty of holiness, the vanity of the world, the immortality of the soul, and the like, and likewise to take occasion, from the objects I meet or converse with in the world, to make such remarks and reflections, as may be for my advantage and improvement in my spiritual affairs. For there is nothing in the world, though it be never so bad, but what I may exercise good thoughts upon: and my neglect, in this kind, has been the real occasion of all those vain thoughts that have hitherto possessed my soul. I have not kept them close to their work, to think upon what is good, and therefore they have run out into those extravagances, which, by the blessing of God, in the performance of these resolutions, I shall endeavour to avoid.

It is indeed, a singular advantage of that high and heavenly calling, in which the Most High, of his wisdom and goodness has been pleased to place me, that all the objects we converse with, and all the subjects we exercise our thoughts upon, are either God and heaven, or something relating to them. So that we need not go out of our common road to meet with this heavenly company, good thoughts. But then, I do not account every thought of God or heaven, which only swims in my brain, to be a good and holy thought, unless it sinks down into my heart and affections, i. e. unless to my meditations of God and another world, I join a longing for him, a rejoicing in him, and a solacing myself in the hopes of a future enjoyment of him. Neither will this be any hindrance, but a furtherance to my studies; for, as I know no divine truths as I ought, unless I know them practically and experimentally;

so I never think I have any clear apprehensions of God, till I find my affections are inflamed towards him ; or that I ever understand any divine truth aright, till my heart be brought into subjection to it.

This resolution, therefore, extends itself not only to the subject matter of my thoughts, but also to the quality of them, with regard to practice, that they may influence my life and conversation, that whether I speak, or write, or eat, or drink, or whatsoever I do, I may still season all, even my commonest actions, with heavenly meditations ; there being nothing I can set my hand to, but I may likewise set my heart a working upon it. Which accordingly I shall endeavour, by the blessing of God, to do. And, for the better ordering of my thoughts,

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, so to marshal my thoughts, that they may not one jostle out another, nor any of them prejudice the business I am about.

MY soul being by nature swift and nimble, and by corruption inordinate and irregular in its operations, I can never set myself to think upon one thing, but presently another presses in, and another after that, and so on, till by thinking of so many things at once, I can think upon nothing to any purpose. And hence it is, that I throw away thousands of thoughts each day for nothing, which, if well managed, might prove very profitable and advantageous to me. To prevent, therefore, this tumultuous, desultory, and useless working of my thoughts, as I have already resolved to fix and settle my heart upon necessary, and useful, and good objects, so, to prevent my thoughts rolling from one thing to another, or leaping from the top of one to the height of another object, I must now endeavour to rank and digest them into order and method, that they may for the future be more steady and regular in their pursuits. I know, the devil and my own corrupt nature will labour to break the ranks and confound the order of them ; what stratagem therefore shall I use, to prevent this confusion ? I shall endeavour, by the grace of God, whensoever I find any idle thoughts begin to frisk and rove out of the way, to call them in again, and set them at work upon one or other of these objects before mentioned, and to keep them, for some time, fixed and intent upon it ; and considering the relations and dependences

of one thing upon another, not to suffer any foreign ideas, such, I mean, as are impertinent to the chain of thoughts I am upon, to jumble them out, or divert my mind another way. No, not though they be otherwise good thoughts ; for thoughts in themselves good, when they crowd in unseasonably, are sometimes attended with very ill effects, by interrupting and preventing some good purposes and resolutions, which might prove more effectual for promoting God's glory, the good of others, and the comfort of our own souls.

These, and such like, are the methods by which I design and resolve to regulate my thoughts : and since I can do nothing without the divine assistance, I earnestly beg of God to give me such a measure of his grace, as may enable me effectually to put these resolutions in practice, that I may not think and resolve in vain.

CONCERNING MY AFFECTIONS.

BUT whilst I am thus ranging my thoughts, I find something of a passion or inclination within me, either drawing me to, or driving me from, every thing I think on ; so that I cannot so much as think upon a thought, but it is either pleasing or displeasing to me, according to the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the object it is placed upon, to my natural affections. If it comes under the pleasing dress and appearance of good, I readily choose and embrace it ; if otherwise, I am as eagerly bent to refuse and reject it. And these two acts of the will are naturally founded in those two reigning passions of the soul, love and hatred, which I cannot but look upon as the grounds of all its other motions and affections. For what are those other passions of desire, hope, joy, and the like, but love in its several postures ? And what else can we conceive of fear, grief, abhorrence, &c. but so many different expressions of hatred, according to the several circumstances that the displeasing object appears to be under. Doth my understanding represent any thing to my will, under the notion of good and pleasant ? my will is presently taken and delighted with it, and so places its love upon it ; and this love, if the object be present, inclines me to embrace it with joy ; if absent, it puts forth itself into desire ; if easy to be attained, it comforts itself with hope ; if difficult, it arms itself with courage ; if impossible, it boils up into anger ; if obstructed, it presently falls down into despair.

On the other hand, doth my understanding represent any object to my will, as evil, or painful, or deformed? How doth it immediately shrink and gather up itself into a loathing and hatred of it! And this hatred, if the ungrateful object be present, puts on the mournful sables of grief and sorrow; if it be at any distance from it, it boils up into detestation and abhorrence; if ready to fall upon it, it shakes for fear; if difficult to be prevented, it strengthens itself with courage and magnanimity, either to conquer or undergo it. These affections, therefore, being thus the constant attendants of my thoughts, it behoves me as much to look to those, as to the other; especially when I consider, that not only my thoughts, but even my actions too, are generally determined to good or bad, accordingly as they are influenced by them. That my affections, therefore, as well as my thoughts, may be duly regulated,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my affections subservient to the dictates of my understanding, that my reason may not follow, but guide my affections.

THE affections being of themselves blind and inordinate, unless they are directed by reason and judgment, they either move toward a wrong object, or pursue the right in a wrong way. And this judgment must be mature and deliberate, such as arises from a clear apprehension of the nature of the object that affects me, and a thorough consideration of the several circumstances that attend it. And great care must be taken, that I do not impose upon myself by fancy and imagination, that I do not mistake fancy for judgment, or the capricious humours of my roving imagination, for the solid dictates of a well-guided reason: for my fancy is as wild as my affections; and if *the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.*

And alas! how often am I deceived in this manner! If I do but fancy a thing good and lovely, how eager are my affections in the pursuit of it? If I do but fancy any thing evil and hurtful to me, how doth my heart presently rise up against it, or grieve and sorrow for it? And this, I believe, hath been the occasion of all the enormities and extravagancies I have been guilty of, through the whole course of my past life, divesting me of my reasonable faculties, as to the acts and exercises of them, and subjecting my soul to the powers of sense, that I

could not raise my affections above them. Thus, for instance, I have not loved grace, because my fancy could not see its beauty; I have not loathed sin, because my fancy could not comprehend its misery; and I have not truly desired heaven, because my fancy could not reach it glory: whereas if the transient beauty and lustre of this world's vanities was but presented to my view, how has my fancy mounted up to the highest pitch of pleasure and ambition, and inflamed my heart with the desire of them?

And thus, poor wretch! have I been carried about with the powerful charms of sense, without having any other guide of my affections, but what is common to the very brutes that perish; fancy supplying that place in the sensitive, which reason does in the rational soul. And alas! what is this, but, with Nebuchadnezzar, to leave communion with men, and herd myself with the flocks of the beasts of the field! And what a shame and reproach is this to the image of God, in which I was created!

Oh! thou, that art the Author of my nature, help me, I beseech thee, to act more conformably to it for the time to come; that I may no longer be bewildered or misled by the blind conduct of straggling fancy, this *ignis fatuus*, that hurries me over bogs and precipices to the pit of destruction, but that I may bring all my affections, and actions to the standard of a clear and sound judgment; and let that judgment be guided by the unerring light of thy divine word; that so I may neither love, desire, fear, nor detest any thing, but what my judgment, thus formed, tells me I ought to do!

I know, it will be very hard thus to subject my affections to the dictates and commands of my judgment; but however, it is my resolution, this morning, in the presence of Almighty God, to endeavour it, and never, to suffer my heart to settle its affections upon any object, till my judgment hath passed its sentence upon it. And as I will not suffer my affections to run before my judgment, so, whenever that is determined, I stedfastly resolve to follow it; that so my apprehensions and affections always going together, I may be sure to walk in the direct path of God's commandments, and enter the gate that leads to everlasting life. And the better to facilitate the performance of this general resolution, it being necessary to descend to particulars;

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to love God, as the best of goods, and to hate sin, as the worst of evils.

As God is the centre of our concupiscible affections, so sin is the object of those we call irascible : and the affections of love and hatred being the ground of all the rest, I must have a great care, that I do not mistake or miscarry in them : for if these be placed upon wrong objects, it is impossible any of the rest should be placed upon right ones. In order, therefore, to prevent such a miscarriage, as God is the greatest good, and sin the greatest evil, I resolve to love God above all things else in the world, and to hate sin to the same degree ; and so to love other things, only in relation to God ; and to hate nothing, but in reference to sin.

As for the first, the loving God above all things, there is nothing seems more reasonable ; inasmuch as there is nothing lovely in any creature, but what it receives from God ; and by how much the more it is like to God, by so much the more it is lovely unto us. Hence it is, that beauty, or an exact symmetry and proportion of parts and colours, so attracts our love, because it so much resembles God, who is beauty and perfection itself. And hence it is, likewise, that grace is the most lovely thing in the world, next to God, as being the image of God himself stamped upon the soul ; nay, it is not only the image and representation, but it is the influence and communication of himself to us ; so that the more we have of grace, we may safely say, so much the more we have of God, within us. Why, therefore, should I grudge my love to him, who only deserves it ; who is not only infinitely lovely in himself, but the author and perfection of all loveliness in his creatures ? Why, the true reason is, that my affections have run a gadding without my judgment, or else my judgment hath been balked or anticipated by my fancy : whereas, now that my apprehensions of God are a little cleared up, and my judgment leads the way, though nobody sees me, yet, methinks, I cannot but blush at myself, that I should ever lie doting upon these dreams and shadows here below, and not fix my affections upon the infinite beauty and all-sufficiency of God above, who deserves my love and admiration so infinitely beyond them. Howsoever, therefore, I have heretofore placed my affections upon other things above God, I am now resolved to love God, not only above many or most things, but above all things else in the world.

And here, by loving God, I do not understand that sensitive affection I place upon material objects ; for it is impossible that that should be fixed upon God, who is a pure spiritual Being ; but that, as by the deliberate choice of my will, I take him for my chiefest good, so I ought to prefer him as such, before my nearest and dearest possessions, interest, or relations, and whatsoever else may at any time stand in competition with him.

And thus, as I shall endeavour to love God, so likewise to hate sin, above all things : and this is as necessary as the former ; for all things else have something of good in them, as they are made by God : but sin being, in its own nature, a privation of good, and directly opposite to the nature and will of God, (as I have before showed,) it has nothing of beauty or amiableness to recommend it to my affections. On the contrary, it is a compound of deformity and defilement, that is always attended with punishment and misery, and must, therefore, be the object of my hatred and abhorrence, wheresoever I find it. For, as God is the centre of all that is good, so is sin the fountain of all the evil in the world. All the strife and contention, ignominy and disgrace, misfortunes and afflictions, that I observe in the world ; all the diseases of my body, and infirmities of my mind ; all the errors of my understanding, and irregularities of my will and affections ; in a word, all the evils whatsoever that I am affected with, or subject to, in this world, are still the fruits and effects of sin : for, if man had never offended the chiefest good, he had never been subject to this train of evils which attended his transgression. Whosoever, therefore, I find myself begin to detest and abhor any evil, I shall, for the future, endeavour to turn my eyes to the spring-head, and loath and detest the fountain that sends forth all those bitter and unwholesome streams, as well as the channels of those corrupt hearts in which they flow. And, for this reason, I resolve to hate sin wherever I find it, whether in myself or in others, in the best of friends, as well as the worst of enemies. Love, I know, and charity, *covers a multitude of sins* ; and where we love the man, we are all of us but too apt to overlook, or excuse, his faults. For the prevention of this, therefore, I firmly resolve, in all my expressions of love to my fellow-creatures, so to love the person, as yet to hate his sins ; and so to hate his sins, as yet to love his person. The last of which, I hope, I shall not find hard to practise, my nature, by the blessing of God, being not easily inclined to hate any man's person whatsoever ; and the former will not be much more difficult, when I consider, that by how much more I love my friend, by so much more should I hate whatsoever will be offensive or destructive to him.

Having thus fixed my resolutions, with regard to those two commanding passions of my soul, love and hatred.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the assistance of divine grace, to make God the principal object of my joy, and sin the principal object of my grief and sorrow; so as to grieve for sin more than suffering, and for suffering only for sin's sake.

THE affections of joy and grief are the immediate issues of love and hatred, and, therefore, not at all to be separated in their object. Having, therefore, resolved to love, I cannot but resolve likewise to rejoice in God above all things; for the same measure of love I have towards any thing, the same measure of complacency and delight I must necessarily have in the enjoyment of it. As, therefore, I love God above all things, and other things only in subserviency to him, so must I rejoice in God above all things, and in other things only as coming from him. I know, I not only may, but must rejoice in the mercies and blessings that God confers upon me; but it is still my duty to rejoice more in what God is in himself, than in what he is pleased to communicate to me: so that I am not only bound to rejoice in God, when I have nothing else, but when I have all things else to rejoice in. Let, therefore, my riches, honours, or my friends, fail me; let my pleasures, my health, and hope, and all, fail me; I am still resolved, by his grace, to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of my salvation. On the other hand, let honour or riches be multiplied upon me; let joy and pleasure, and all that a carnal heart (like mine) can wish for or desire, be thrown upon me; yet I am still resolved, that as it is my business to serve God, so shall it be my delight and comfort to rejoice in him.

And as God shall thus be my chiefest joy, so shall sin be my greatest grief; for I account no condition miserable, but that which results from, or leads me unto, sin: so that when any thing befalls me, which may bear the face of suffering, and fill my heart with sorrow, I shall still endeavour to keep off the smart, till I know from whence it comes. If sin has kindled the fire of God's wrath against me, and brought these judgments upon me, oh! what a heavy load shall I then feel upon my soul? And how shall I groan and complain under the burden of it? But if there be nothing of the poison of sin

dropped into this cup of sorrows, though it may perhaps prove bitter to my senses, yet it will, in the end, prove healthful to my soul; as being not kindled at the furnace of God's wrath, but at the flames of his love and affection for me. So that I am so far from having cause to be sorry for the sufferings he brings upon me, that I have much greater cause to rejoice in them, as being an argument of the love and affection he bears to me; *for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, Heb. xii. 9.

And having thus resolved to rejoice in nothing but God, and grieve for nothing but sin, I must not be cast down and dejected at every providence which the men here below count a loss or affliction; for, certainly, all the misery I find in any thing extrinsical, is created by myself; nothing but what is in me being properly an affliction to me; so that it is my fancy that is the ground of misery in all things without myself. If I did not fancy some evil or misery in the loss of such an enjoyment, it would be no misery at all to me; because I am still the same as I was, and have as much as I had before. For it is God that is the portion of my soul; and therefore, should I lose every thing I have in the world besides, yet having God, I cannot be said to lose any thing, because I have him that hath, and is, all things in himself. Whenssoever, therefore, any thing befalls me, that uses to be matter of sorrow and dejection to me, I must not presently be affected with, nor dejected at it, but still behave myself like an heir of heaven, and, living above the smiles and frowns of this world, account nothing matter of joy, but so far as I enjoy of God's love; nor any thing matter of sorrow, but so much as I see of his anger in it.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved by the grace of God, to desire spiritual mercies more than temporal; and temporal mercies only in reference to spiritual.

HAVING rectified the balance of my judgment according to Scripture; when I would begin to weigh temporal things with spiritual, I find there is no proportion, and so no comparison to be made betwixt them. And will any wise man, then, that pretends to reason, be at a stand which of these to choose, which to esteem the best, or desire most? Alas! what is there

in the world that can fill the vast desires of my soul, but only he, who is infinitely above me and my desires too? Will riches do it? No; I may as soon undertake to fill my barns with grace, as my heart with gold; and as easily stuff my bags with virtue, as ever satisfy my desires with wealth. Do I hunt after pleasures? These may, indeed, charm and delight my brutish senses, but can never be agreeable or proportionate to my spiritual faculties. Do I grasp at honour and popularity? These again are as empty and unsatisfying as the former; they may make me look high and great in the eye of the world, turn my head giddy with applause, or puff up my heart with pride, but they can never fill up the measure of its desires. And thus, if I should have the whole world at my command, and could, with Alexander, wield both sword and sceptre over all the nations and languages of it, would this content me? or rather, should I not sit down and weep with him, that I had not another world to conquer and possess? Whereas, God being an infinite good, it is impossible for me to desire any thing, which I may not enjoy in him and his mercies: let me, or any other creature, extend our desires never so far, still the graces and blessings of this infinite God will be infinitely beyond them all: insomuch that though ten thousand worlds are not able to satisfy one soul, yet one God is able to satisfy ten thousand souls; yea, and ten millions more to them, as well as if there was only one soul in all the world to satisfy.

Come, therefore, my dear Lord and Saviour! whilst thy servant is breathing after thee, and possess my heart with the spiritual blessings of grace and faith, peace and charity; and let none of these empty and transient delights of this world stand in competition with them! Thou art the source and centre of all my wishes and desires; even *as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!* Oh! when shall I appear in thy presence? When, when shall that blessed time come, that I shall see thy sacred Majesty face to face? This is a mercy, I confess, which I cannot expect, whilst imprisoned in the body: but, howsoever, though I must not yet appear before thee, do thou vouchsafe to appear in me, and give me such glimpses of thy love and graces here, as may be an earnest of the bliss and glory I am to enjoy hereafter!

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to hope for nothing so much as the promises, and to fear nothing so much as the threatenings, of God.

My soul being inflamed with holy desires after God, my heart cannot but be big with the hopes and expectations of him : and, truly, as there is nothing that I can absolutely desire, so neither is there any thing that I can assuredly hope for and depend upon, but God himself, and the promises he has made to me in his divine word. For, as all things derive their being and subsistence from him, so they are all at his beck and command, and are acted and influenced as his wisdom and pleasure sees fit to order them. All the secondary causes are in his hand, and he turns them which way soever he will ; so that, however improbable and disproportionate the means he uses may appear to be, he never fails to accomplish the end, or whatever he wills and decrees to be done. And, therefore, wherever I meet with any promises made over to the faithful in his sacred word, (since they are the promises of one who is infinitely just and true, who can neither dissemble, nor deceive,) I cannot in the least doubt, but they will be punctually fulfilled ; and if I am of that happy number, (as I trust, through the merits of Christ, and my own sincere endeavours, I shall approve myself to be,) I have as much assurance of being partaker of them, as if I had them actually in possession, or as any of the faithful servants of God, who have already experienced the accomplishment of them.

But, suppose God should not favour me with the bright part of his promises, but, instead of the blessings of health and prosperity, should visit me with crosses and afflictions ; yet, I have still the same grounds for my hope and confidence in him, and may say with the Psalmist, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what the devil or man can do unto me.* For, though their spite and malice may sometimes cross, afflict, and persecute me ; yet, since I am assured, they are only as instruments in the hand of God, that cannot go beyond their commission, nor make me suffer more than I am able to bear, I may comfort myself, under all these afflictions, by the same divine promise that St. Paul had recourse to, on the like occasion ; to wit, *that all shall work together for good to them that love God, who are the called, according to his purpose,* Rom. viii. 28. The devil could not touch the possessions of Job, till he had

received a commission from God; nor could he come near his body, till that commission was renewed; and so, neither can he, or any creature whatsoever, throw any evil upon me, without the divine permission; and even that, though it seems to be evil, shall really, in the end, turn to my benefit and advantage. Oh! what a sovereign antidote is this against all despondency and despair, even under the deepest and severest trials? Permit me, O my God! to apply this sacred promise to myself, and say, I am assured of it, by my own experience! For I can hardly remember any one thing that ever happened to me, in the whole course of my life, even to the crossing of my most earnest desires, and highest expectations, but what I must confess, to the praise of thy grace and goodness, has really, in the end, turned to my advantage another way. Oh! make me truly sensible of all thy promises to, and dealings with me, that whatever storms and surges may arise in the tempestuous ocean of this transient world, I may still fix the anchor of my hope and happiness in thee, who art the source and spring of all blessings, and without whom no evil or calamity could ever befall me!

And as the promises of God, upon all those accounts, are to be the object of my hope; so are his threatenings to be of my fear and aversion: as the former are of excellent use to raise and revive the most drooping hearts, so the latter are of weight enough to sink and depress the stoutest and most undaunted spirits, and make them lick up the dust of horror and despair. Not to mention any thing of the exquisite and eternal miseries denounced against the wicked in the next world, with which the Scriptures every where abound, there is one punishment threatened to be inflicted here, which is, of itself, sufficient to do this; and that is, in Mal. ii. 2. *If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings.* Most dreadful sentence! which none, that consider aright, can be able to read, without trembling and astonishment. Alas! if God should curse me, where should I seek for blessing, since he is the only fountain from which it flows, and by which it is conveyed and communicated to me? And if he should curse my very blessings, what could I hope for, but misery and despair? My health, my wealth, my preferments, my relations, nay, my very life itself, would all be accursed to me; and what is yet worse, even my spiritual exercises and performances, upon which I chiefly build my hopes of happiness, my preaching, praying, and communicating, would all become a snare and a curse to me: yea, and

Christ himself, who came into the world to bless and redeem me, if I walk not in his fear, believe not his Gospel, or give not glory to his name, will himself be a curse and condemnation to me. So that I may say of every thing I have, or enjoy, or expect, all these God has made curses to me, because I have not blessed and glorified him in them. Oh! who would not tremble and be wrought upon by these threatenings? Who would not fear thee, O King of nations, who art thus terrible in thy judgments? Who would not love and obey thee, who art so gracious in thy promises? Teach me, I beseech thee, so to place my fear upon the former, that I may still fix my hope upon the latter, that though I fear thy dreadful curses, yet I may never despair of thy tender mercies!

RESOLUTION VI.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to arm myself with that spiritual courage and magnanimity, as to press through all duties and difficulties whatsoever, for the advancement of God's glory, and my own happiness.

CHRISTIANITY is well termed a warfare; for it is, wherein no danger can be prevented, no enemy conquered, no victory obtained, without much courage and resolution. I have not only many outward enemies to grapple with, but I have myself, my worst enemy, to encounter and subdue. As for those enemies which are not near me, by the assistance of God's Spirit, I can make pretty good shift to keep them at the sword's point: but this enemy that is gotten within me, has so often foiled and disarmed me, that I have reason to say, as David did of his enemies, *It is too strong for me*: and, as he said of the chief of his, *I shall one day fall by the hands of Saul*; so have I too much occasion to say, I shall fall by myself, as being myself the greatest enemy to my own spiritual interest and concerns. How necessary is it then that I should raise and muster up all my force and courage, put on my spiritual armour, and make myself strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? I know I must strive, before I can *enter in at the strait gate*; I must win the crown, before I can wear it; and be a member of the church militant, before I be admitted into the church triumphant. In a word, I must go through a solitary wilderness, and conquer many enemies, before I come to the land of Canaan; or else I must never be

possessed of it. What then? Shall I lose my glory, to balk my duty? Shall I let go my glorious and eternal possession, to save myself from a seeming hardship, which the devil would persuade me to be a trouble and an affliction? Alas! if Christ had laid aside the great work of my redemption, to avoid the undergoing of God's anger and man's malice, what a miserable condition had I been in? And, therefore, whatever taunts and reproaches I meet with, from the presumptuous and profane, the infidel and atheistical reprobates of the age; let them laugh at my profession, or mock at what they are pleased to call preciseness; let them defraud me of my just rights, or traduce and bereave me of my good name and reputation; let them vent the utmost of their poisonous malice and envy against me; I have this comfortable reflection still to support me, that if I suffer all this for Christ's sake, it is in the cause of one who suffered a thousand times more for mine; and, therefore, it ought to be matter of joy and triumph, rather than of grief and dejection to me: especially, considering, that *these my light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Upon the prospect of which, I firmly resolve, notwithstanding the growing strength of sin, and the over bearing prevalency of my own corrupt affections, to undertake all duties and undergo all miseries, that God, in his infinite wisdom, thinks fit to lay upon me, or exercise my patience in.

RESOLUTION VII.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, so to be angry, as not to sin, and, therefore, to be angry at nothing but sin.

THE former part of the resolution is founded in the express command of St. Paul, *be ye angry, and sin not*, Eph. iv. 26. and the latter is an explication of, as well as an inference drawn from it. For, if anger be not only lawful, but a duty, as is here supposed, when it does not involve us in sin; the only difficulty is, to know how that passion ought to be qualified, to justify the exercise of it, without being guilty of sin: and the circumstances or qualifications required for this are, first, that it be placed upon a due object; and, secondly, that it do not exceed its proper bounds.

Now, as nothing can deserve my anger, but what is disagreeable to my nature, and offensive to the author of it, so

nothing but sin can properly be called its object. The chief thing that I am to aim at in my actions is the honouring, serving, and pleasing God; and how can I serve and please God, in being angry at any thing but what I know is displeasing to him? I may be scorned, reproached, and vilified among my equals, or accused, condemned, and punished by my superiors; and these are treatments that are but too apt to raise and transport men into anger and revenge: but then, before I suffer this passion to boil up in me, I ought to consider, whether I have not behaved myself so, as to deserve this sort of treatment; if I have, then there is no injury or injustice done me thereby, and, therefore, I ought not to be angry at it: if I have not, I must not be angry at the persons who act thus falsely and unjustly against me, but only at their sin; for, to speak properly, it is not the person that offends me, but the sin. And this, not because it is injurious to me, but because it is offensive and displeasing to God himself; for, to be angry at any thing but what displeases God, is to displease God in being angry. Whenever, therefore, I receive any affronts or provocations of this nature, I am resolved, by God's grace assisting my endeavours, never to be moved, or troubled at them, farther than they are in their own nature sinful, and at the same time abstracting the sin from the persons, to pray for the pardon of those that are guilty of it; and not only so, but according to the command and example of my Saviour, even to love them too.

But, how shall I be sure to be angry at nothing but sin, and so not to sin in my anger, when every petty trifle or cross accident is so apt to raise this passion in me? Why, the best method I can take is that which the wise man directs me to, *not to be hasty in my spirit*, Eccles. vii. but, *to defer my anger* according to discretion, Prov. xix. 11. So that, whenever any thing happens that may incense and inflame my passion, I must immediately stop its career, and suspend the acts of it, till I have duly considered the motives and occasions that raised it. And, as this will be a very good means to regulate the object of my anger, so likewise the measure of it: for, he that is slow to wrath, takes time to consider, and, by consequence, puts his passion under the conduct of his reason; and, whoever does so, it will never suffer it to be transported beyond its proper bounds: whereas he, whose anger is like tinder, that catches as soon as the spark is upon it, and who uses no means to stop its spreading, is presently blown up into a furious flame, which, before it is extinguished, do more mischief than he is ever able to repair; for, no man knows

whither his anger may hurry him, when once it has got the mastery of him. In order, therefore, to prevent the fatal consequences of this passion, I now resolve never to speak or do any thing, while I am under the influence of it, but take time to consider with myself, and reflect upon the several circumstances of the action or object it arises from, as well as the occasion and tendency of it; and, as oft as I find any thing in it displeasing to God, to be regularly angry at that, to correct, rebuke, and reprove it, with a zeal and fervour of spirit, suitable to the occasion; but still to keep within the bounds of the truly Christian temper, which is always distinguished by love and charity, and exercises itself in meekness and moderation. And, oh, what a sedate and contented spirit will this resolution breed in me? How easy and quiet shall I be under all circumstances? Whilst others are peevish and fretful, and torment themselves with every petty trifle that does but cross their inclinations, or seem to be injurious to them; or fall into the other extreme, of a stoical apathy or insensibility; I shall, by this resolution, maintain a medium betwixt both, and possess my soul in peace and patience.

CONCERNING MY WORDS.

HAVING thus far cleansed the fountain of my heart, with regard to my thoughts and affections, which are the immediate issues of my active soul, the next thing incumbent upon me is to regulate my outward conversation, both with respect to my words and actions. As to the first, the holy Scripture assures me, that the tongue is *a world of iniquity*, James iii. 6. And again, that *it is an unruly evil which no man can tame*, ver. 8. But is it, indeed, so unruly? Then there is the more occasion to have it governed and subdued; and, since that is not to be done by man alone, it is still more necessary, that I should call in the assistance of that divine Spirit that gives this character of it, first to fix my resolutions, and then to strengthen me in the performance of them. I stedfastly purpose to imitate the royal Psalmist in this particular, and *to take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue*, Psalm xxxix. 1. Yea, I am resolved, with holy Job, that *all the while my breath, and the Spirit of God, is in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit*, Job xxvii. 3, 4. But, since it is such an unruly instrument, so very difficult to be bridled or restrained, do thou, O God, who first madest it, en-

able me to get the mastery of it! *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips, that, with St. Paul, I may speak forth the words of truth and soberness, and make this unruly evil a happy instrument of much good! Which that I may do,*

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to speak much, lest I often speak too much; and not speak at all, rather than to no purpose.

IT is the *voice of fools that is known by the multitude of words*, Eccl. v. 3. in which there are *divers vanities*, ver. 7. and *sin too*, Prov. x. 19. whereas, *he that refraineth his lips, is wise*. This is that piece of Christian wisdom, which I am now resolving to look after; and therefore, never to deliver my words out to the world by number, but by weight; not by quantity, but quality; not hiding my meaning under ambiguous terms and expressions, but fitting words exactly to express my meaning: not amusing those I converse with, with circles of impertinence and circumlocution, but coming directly to the matter, by the straight line of apt expressions; so as never to speak more than the matter requireth, nor to speak at all, when no matter requireth. For, why should I spend my breath for nothing? Alas! that is not all; if I spend it ill, it will be far worse than spending it for nothing; for our blessed Saviour has told me, that I must answer *for every idle and unprofitable, as well as profane word*, Matt. xii. 36. But now, if all the vain words I ever spoke should be written, as I have cause to believe they are, in the book of God's remembrance, how many vast volumes must they make! and if an index should be made, where to find profitable, and where idle words, how few references would there be to the former? what multitudes to the latter? and (what is yet more terrifying) if all these words should be brought in judgment against me at the last day, how would those very words then make me speechless? and what shame and confusion of face would they then strike me with? But I trust, through the blood of my Redeemer, and the tears of my repentance, they will all be washed and blotted out, before I come to appear before him. In order to this, as I heartily bewail and detest my former follies in this respect; so I firmly purpose and resolve to use my utmost endeavours, for the time

to come, not to give way to any more such idle words and expressions, as are likely to be thus prejudicial to my eternal interest ; but always to consider well beforehand what, and how, and why I speak, and suffer no corrupt communication to *proceed out of my mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers*, Eph. iv. 29.

I know, there are some words, that are purely jocose, spoken with no other intent, but only to promote mirth, and divert melancholy ; and these words, so long as they are harmless and innocent, so long as they do not reflect dishonour upon God, nor injure the character and reputation of my neighbour, are very lawful and allowable ; inasmuch as they conduce to the refreshing and reviving of my spirits, and the preservation of my health. But then, I must always take care so to wind and turn my discourse, that what recreates me in speaking, may profit others when spoke ; that my words may not only be such as have no malignity in them, but such as may be useful and beneficial ; not only such as do no hurt, but likewise such as may do much good to others, as well as to myself. To this end, I firmly resolve, by the grace of God, never to speak only for the sake of speaking, but to weigh each word before I speak it, and consider the consequence and tendency of it, whether it may really be the occasion of good or evil, or tend to the edifying or scandalizing of the person I speak it to.

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, not only to avoid the wickedness of swearing falsely, but likewise the very appearance of swearing at all.

PERJURY is a sin condemned by the very laws of nature ; insomuch that I should wrong my natural faculties, should I give way to, or be guilty of it. For, the same nature that tells me the person of God is to be adored, tells me likewise his name is to be revered ; and what more horrid impiety can possibly be imagined, than to prostitute the most sacred name of the most high God, to confirm the lies of sinful men ? I know, swearing in a just matter, and right manner, may be as lawful under the New, as under the Old Testament ; for thus I find St. Paul saying, *As God is true*, 2 Cor. i. 18. and ver. 23. *I call God for a record upon my soul* ; wherein is contained the very nature of an oath, which is, the calling God

for a record and a witness to the truth of what we speak : but when it is to maintain falsehood, which is to an ill purpose, or lightly and vainly, which is to no purpose at all, it is a sin of the highest aggravation, that ought, with the greatest detestation and abhorrence, to be shunned and avoided. God saith, by Moses, Lev. xix. 12. *Thou shalt not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God : I am the Lord.* And, Exod. xx. 7. Deut. v. 11. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* But farther, God says, by Christ, *Swear not at all ; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne ; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, &c.* So that not only by God, and by Jesus, are oaths, but swearing by any of God's creatures, is, in a manner, to swear by God himself. I swear by the heavens ; can the heavens hear, or witness what I say ? No, it is the glorious Majesty that rules there, that I call upon to witness the truth of the words I speak, and the sinfulness of my heart for swearing to them. Do I swear by my faith ? But how is that ? Can faith testify what I say ? No, it is only he that wrought this faith in my heart can witness the truth of my words. And if I swear by the gifts of God, I do, in effect, swear by God himself ; otherwise, I ascribe that to the creature, which is only compatible to the glorious Creator, even the knowledge of the thoughts of my heart, how secret soever they be.

But again, there is more in the third commandment, than the devil would persuade the world there is ; for, when God commands me *not to take his name in vain*, it is more than if he had commanded me only not to swear by it : for I cannot persuade myself, but that every time I speak of God, when I do not think of him, I take his name in vain ; and, therefore, I ought to endeavour to avoid even mentioning of God, as well as swearing by him, unless upon urgent occasions, and with reverence and respect becoming his majesty ; for, questionless, *O Lord*, and *O God*, may be spoken as vainly, as *By Lord*, and *By God*. And, therefore, I ought never to speak such words, without thinking really in my heart, what I speak openly with my mouth, lest my name be written amongst those that *take the name of God in vain*. But farther still, I am resolved not only to avoid downright swearing, but likewise the very appearance of it : so that what doth but look like an oath, shall be as odious to me, as what looks like nothing else.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my tongue and heart go together, so as never to speak with the one, what I do not think in the other.

As my happiness consisteth in nearness and vicinity, so doth my holiness in likeness and conformity, to the chiefest good. I am so much the better, as I am liker the best; and so much the holier, as I am more conformable to the holiest, or rather, to him who is holiness itself. Now, one great title which the Most High is pleased to give to himself, and by which he is pleased to reveal himself to us, is, the God of truth: so that I shall be so much the liker to the God of truth, by how much I am more constant to the truth of God. And the farther I deviate from this, the nearer I approach to the nature of the devil, who *is the father of lies*, and liars too, John viii. 44. And hence it is, that of all the sins the men of fashion are guilty of, they can least endure to be charged of lying. To give a man the lie, or to say, You lie, is looked upon as the greatest affront that can be put upon them. And why so? But only because the sin of lying makes them so like their father the devil, that a man had almost as well call them devils, as liars; and therefore, to avoid the scandal and reproach, as well as the dangerous malignity of this damnable sin, I am resolved, by the blessing of God, always to tune my tongue in unison to my heart, so as never to speak any thing but what I think really to be true. So that, if I ever speak what is not true, it shall not be the error of my will, but of my understanding.

I know, lies are commonly distinguished into officious, pernicious, and jocose; and some may fancy some of them more tolerable than others. But, for my own part, I think, they are all pernicious, and therefore not to be jested withal, nor indulged upon any pretence or colour whatsoever. Not as if it was a sin, not to speak exactly as a thing is in itself, or as it seems to me in its literal meaning, without some liberty granted to rhetorical tropes and figures; (for so the Scripture itself would be chargeable with lies; many things being contained in it, which are not true in a literal sense.) But I must so use rhetorical, as not to abuse my Christian, liberty; and, therefore, never make use of hyperboles, ironies, or other tropes and figures, to deceive or impose upon my auditors,

but only for the better adorning, illustrating, or confirming the matter.

But there is another sort of lies most men are apt to fall into, and they are promissory lies; to avoid which, I am resolved, never to promise any thing with my mouth, but what I intend to perform in my heart; and never to intend to perform any thing, but what I am sure I can perform. For this is the cause and occasion of most promissory lies, that we promise that absolutely, which we should promise only conditionally: for, though I may intend to do as I say now, yet there are a thousand weighty things may intervene, which may turn the balance of my intentions, or otherwise hinder the performance of my promise. So that, unless I be absolutely sure I can do a thing, I must never absolutely promise to do it; and, therefore, in all such promises, shall still put in *God willing, or, by the help of God*; at the same time lifting up my heart to God, lest I take his name in vain.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to speak of other men's sins only before their faces, and of their virtues only behind their backs.

To commend men when they are present, I esteem almost as great a piece of folly, as to reprove them when they are absent; though I do confess, in some cases, and to some persons, it may be commendable, especially when the person is not apt to be puffed up, but spurred on by it. But, to rail at others, when they hear me not, is the highest piece of folly imaginable; for, as it is impossible they should get any good, so it is impossible but that I should get much hurt by it. For such sort of words, make the best we can of them, are but idle and unprofitable, and may not only prove injurious to the person of whom, but even to whom, they are spoken, by wounding the credit of the former, and the charity of the latter, and so, by consequence, my own soul; nay, even though I speak that which is true in itself, and known to be so to me: and, therefore, this way of backbiting ought, by all means, to be avoided.

But I must, much more, have a care of raising false reports concerning any one, or of giving credit to them that raise them, or of passing my judgment, till I have weighed the mat-

ter ; lest I transgress the rules of mercy and charity, which command me not to censure any one upon others' rumours, or my own surmises ; nay, if the thing be in itself true, still to interpret it in the best sense. But, if I must needs be raking in other men's stores, it must not be behind their backs, but before their faces ; for the one is a great sin, and the other may be as great a duty, even to reprove my neighbour for doing any thing offensive unto God, or destructive to his own soul ; still endeavouring so to manage the reproof, as to make his sin loathsome to him, and prevail upon him, if possible, to forsake it : but there is a great deal of Christian prudence and discretion to be used in this, lest others may justly reprove me for my indiscreet reproof of others. I must still fit my reproof to the time when, the person to whom, and the sin against which, it is designed ; still contriving with myself, how to carry on this duty so, as that by *converting a sinner from the evil of his ways, I may save my soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins*, James v. 20. Not venting my anger against the person, but my sorrow for the sin that is reproved. Hot, passionate, and reviling words, will not so much exasperate a man against his sin that is reproved, as against the person that doth reprove it. It is *not the wrath of man that worketh the righteousness of God*, James i. 20. But this of all duties, must be performed with a spirit of love and meekness ; I must first insinuate myself into his affections, and then press his sin upon his conscience, and that directly or indirectly, as the person, matter or occasion shall require, that so he that is reproved by me now, may have cause to bless God for me to all eternity.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to speak reverently to my superiors, humbly to my inferiors, and civilly to all.

THE most high God, the master of this great family, the world, for the more orderly government of it, hath, according to his infinite wisdom, set some in higher, some in lower places. hath made some as stewards, others as under-servants ; and, according to every man's work that he expects from him, he measures out his talents to him. Blessed be his name for it, he hath set me in a middle form, giving me Agar's wish, subject neither to envy on one hand, nor pity on the other ; so

that I have both superiors to reverence, and inferiors to condescend to. And, accordingly, it is my duty so to behave myself towards them, that the reverend expressions of my mouth may manifest the obedient subjection of my heart, to the power and authority God has given them over me. It is the express command of the Gospel, that we should render to every man his due, *fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour belongeth*, Rom. xiii. 7. which words plainly imply, both that it is some men's due to receive honour, and other men's duty to give it. And, accordingly, we find, Paul, when he was brought before Festus, doth not say *Art thou he, whom they call Festus?* or, *Thou Festus*, as the misguided enthusiasts, in our days, would have said: but, *Most noble Festus*, Acts xxvi. 25. In like manner, St. John doth not call her he writes to, in his second Epistle, being a person of quality, *Woman*, but *Elect Lady*. And this sort of reverence is farther confirmed to us, not only by the constant custom of all nations, in all ages of the world, but it is likewise highly agreeable to the rules of right reason, as well as the order of government. For, as there is both a natural and civil superiority, a superiority in gifts and age, and a superiority likewise in office and station; so there is nothing can be more necessary, than that there should be, in both these respects, a reverence and respect paid to the persons of men, answerable to these distinctions. And, therefore, I cannot but condemn that rude and unmannerly behaviour of some of our modern schismatics, towards their superiors, as factious and unreasonable, as well as repugnant to the dictates of the divine Spirit, which the prophets and apostles were inspired and influenced by.

And, as there is a reverence due from inferiors to their superiors, in point of conversation, so likewise are there some decent regards and civilities to be shewed even by superiors to their inferiors, who are always to be treated with candour and condescension, in their ordinary capacities; and even where they are considered as criminals, with meekness and moderation. Insomuch that, methinks, it is one of the worst sights in the world, to see some men, that are gotten upon a little higher ground than their neighbours are, to look proudly and scornfully down upon all that are below them, disdainingly to vouchsafe them the least favour or respect whatsoever. Such churlish, haughty, and foul-mouthed Nabals as these, are not only very unjust, and unreasonable in their behaviour to others, but they are certainly the greatest enemies to themselves, that they have in all the world besides; not only by drawing upon them the hatred and enmity of all that are about them, but

likewise by tormenting themselves with such frivolous things, as such spirits commonly do. Wherefore, that I may please God, my neighbour, and myself, in what I speak, though I could excel other men (which is impossible for me to suppose) in every thing; I resolve, by God's grace, always to behave myself so, as if I excelled them in nothing; and not only to speak reverently to them that are above me, but humbly and civilly to those that are beneath me too. I will always endeavour to use such humble winning words, as to manifest more of my love to them, than my power over them: I will always season my tongue with savoury, not bitter expressions, not making my mouth a vent for my fury and passion to fume out at, but rather an instrument to draw others' love and affection in by; still speaking as civilly unto others, as I would have them speak civilly to me.

CONCERNING MY ACTIONS.

THE other way of my soul's putting forth, and shewing herself to the world, is, by her actions, which it concerns me as much to look to and regulate, as my words; forasmuch as there is not the least ill circumstance in any action, but what, unless it be repented of, must be brought into question, and answered for, at the last day: for though an action cannot be denominated good, unless it be good in all circumstances and respects; yet it is always denominated bad, if it is bad only in one. As it is in music, if but one string jar, or be out of tune, the whole harmony is spoiled; so here, if but one circumstance in an action be wanting or defective, the whole action is thereby rendered immoral.

How much, therefore, doth it behove me to keep a strict watch over myself, and so to perform every action, and place every circumstance in it, that it may have its approbation in the court of heaven? Well; I am resolved, by the grace of God, to try what I can do. I know, it is impossible for me to resolve upon particular actions: but, howsoever, I shall resolve upon such general rules, the application of which to particular acts may make them pleasing and acceptable to the sight of God; always premising this which I have resolved upon before, as the best foundation, viz. to square all my actions by the Scripture rule, and to do nothing, but what I have, some way or other, a warrant for in the word of God. Upon this fixed and steady principle,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do every thing in obedience to the will of God.

It is not sufficient, that what I do is the will of God, but I must therefore do it, because it is the will of God. For, what saith my Father? *My son give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways*, Prov. xxiii. 26. So that my Father will not only have my hand, but my heart too: and my feet must not walk in the ways of God, till my eyes have observed and discerned them to be so. I may do an action that in itself is good, and yet, at the same time not do a good action, if I do not therefore do it, because it is so; *ex. gr.* I may give an alms to the poor, feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; but let me examine and consider well, upon what principle these actions are founded, whether I therefore do them, because God hath commanded them; if not, my feeding of the poor will be no more a good action, than the ravens feeding the prophet was, 1 Kings xvii. 6. Their feeding of the prophet was commanded by God, as well as my feeding of the poor; but I cannot say, they did a good action; because though they did do this which was commanded by God, yet being irrational creatures, they could not reflect upon that command, and so could not do this in obedience to it.

There are some persons, to the very frame and disposition of whose spirits some sins are, in their nature, odious and abominable. Thus I have known some, whose very constitutions have carried them into an antipathy to lust and luxury; and others again, who could never endure to drink beyond their thirst, much less to unman and be-beast themselves by drinking to excess. And the like may be observed of covetousness, which Luther was such an enemy to, that it is said to be against his very nature. Now, I say, though the abstaining from these sins be highly commendable in all sorts of persons, yet unless, together with the streams of their natural disposition, there run likewise a spiritual desire to please God, and obey his commands, their abstaining from these vices is no more than the brute beasts themselves do, who always act according to the temper of their bodies, and are never guilty of any excesses that are prejudicial to them. Hence, servants are commanded to be *obedient to their masters, with good-will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men*; Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7. which clearly shows, that though a servant doth obey his

master, yet if he doth not do it in obedience unto God, he will not find acceptance with him. So that, whensoever I set my hand to any action that is good, I must still fix my eye upon God's commanding of it, and do it only in respect to that; as knowing, that if I give but a farthing to the poor in all my life, and do it in obedience to God's commands, it shall be accepted sooner than theirs, who feed hundreds at their table every day, and have not respect to the same command.

Do I see a poor wretch ready to fall down to the earth for want of a little support, and my bowels begin to yearn towards him? let me search into my heart, and see what it is that raises this compassion in me. If it flows only from a natural tenderness to a brother in misery, without regard to the love of God, who has commanded and enjoined it, the poor man may be succoured and relieved, but God will not be pleased or delighted with it. Again, do my friends stir me up to pray or hear, or do any other spiritual or civil action, and I therefore only do it, because of their importunity? I may satisfy my friends' desire, but cannot properly be said to obey the commands of God, in such a performance; so that the great and only foundation that I must resolve to build all the actions of my life upon is an uniform obedience to that God, by whom alone I am enabled to perform them.

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do every thing with prudence and discretion, as well as with zeal and affection.

WHILST I am penned up in this earthly tabernacle, I live almost as in a darksome dungeon, having no light to work by, but a little that springs in at the narrow crevices of my understanding. So that I had need to make use of all that little light and knowledge I have, to regulate the heat and zeal that sometimes sits upon my spirit. For, good passions may sometimes carry me into bad actions; my zeal, when hot in the pursuits of God's glory, may sometimes hurry me beyond his laws; especially, where Christian prudence hath not first chalked out the way, and set the bounds for it: as, in discourse, my zeal may put me upon throwing pearls before swine, or using words, when silence may be more commendable; so, in my actions too, unless wisdom and discretion govern and command my affections, I shall frequently run into

such as would be altogether needless and impertinent, and therefore ought to be omitted, and daily neglect several duties, which ought to be performed.

But, my understanding and discretion is chiefly requisite for the ordering of time and place, and other particular circumstances, the irregular management of which may easily spoil the best of actions. For instance, that may be a good work at one time and place, which is not at another; and may be very innocent and becoming in one person, though quite contrary in another. It is, therefore, the proper office of my understanding, to point out the fittest time and place, and person, for the performance of each action I engage in. As for example, in distributing to the poor, my hand of charity must be either guided by the eye of understanding, where, when, how much, and to whom, to give; or else I may, at the same time, not only offend God, but wrong my neighbour, and myself too. And so for all other actions whatsoever; which I ought, therefore, never to set myself about, though it be of the lowest rank, without consulting the rules of wisdom, modelled by the law of God.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to set my hand, my head, or my heart, about any thing, but what I verily believe is good in itself, and will be esteemed so by God.

Without faith, the Apostle tells me, *it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6. *For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*, Rom. xiv. 23. Where, by faith, we are not to understand that saving faith, whereby I believe my person is justified through Christ; but that, whereby I believe my works shall be accepted by God: for faith here is opposed to doubting; and that not about Christ's dying for me, or my living in him, but about the particular actions of my life. *He that doubteth*, saith the apostle, *is damned, if he eat*; that is, he that eateth that which he doubteth whether he may lawfully eat or no, is damned; because he sins in doing it, and therefore may be damned for it. But why so? Because *he eateth not of faith*; because he doth that, which he knows not whether he may do or no, not believing it to be really good in itself, or acceptable unto God. And, though the apostle here instances only in that particular action of eating, yet what he says with relation to that, is pro-

perly applicable to all the other actions of life : for, he afterwards subjoins, *whatsoever is not of faith, is sin* ; whatsoever it is, good or bad, if not done by faith, it is sin.

And truly, this particular will be of great use through my whole life, for the avoiding of many sins, and for the doing of much good : for many things, which are good in themselves, may, for want of faith, become quite otherwise to me ; my heart not believing what I do is good, my hand can never make it so. Or, if I think what I do is bad, though it be not so in itself, yet my very thinking it so, will make it so to me.

And this is that which we call doing any thing with a good conscience, or keeping, as St. Paul did, *our conscience void of offence*. And to go contrary to the dictates of my conscience in this particular, is to transgress the command of God. For in this, conscience is as God's vicegerent in my soul ; what conscience commands, God commands ; what conscience forbids, God forbids ; that is, I am as really under the power of conscience, as the commands of God, in such a case. So that, if I do not obey the former, it is impossible for me to obey the latter. But how much then doth it behove me to see that my conscience be rightly informed in every thing ? For as, if a judge be misinformed, it is impossible he should pass righteous judgment ; so, if conscience be misinformed, it is impossible I should do a righteous act. And, what a miserable case shall I then be in ? If I do what in itself is sinful, though my conscience tells me it is good, yet I sin, because the act in itself is sinful ; and if I do what in itself is good, and my conscience tells me it is bad, I sin, because my conscience tells me it is so : so that as my conscience is, so will my actions be.

For this reason, I resolve, in the presence of my great Creator, never to do any thing, till I have first informed my conscience, from the word of God, whether it be lawful for me to do it, or no ; or, in case it be not determined there, to make a strict search and enquiry into each circumstance of it, considering with myself what good or evil may issue from it, and so, what good or evil there is in it ; and, according as my conscience, upon the hearing of the arguments on both sides, shall decide the matter, I shall do, or not do it ; never undertaking any thing upon mere surmises, because it may be good, but upon a real and thorough persuasion that it is so.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do all things for the glory of God.

As I was not made by, so neither for myself; for God, says the wise man, *made all things for himself*, Prov. xvi. 4. And being thus made for God, it follows, on course, that I ought to act for God; otherwise, I shall frustrate the end of my creation. Insomuch that whatsoever I make my chief aim in what I do, I make that my God. Do I aim at the glory of the all-glorious Jehovah? it is him I make my God. Do I aim at riches? then it is Mammon I make my God: and therefore is it, that covetousness is called idolatry, Col. iii. 5. Do I aim at pleasures? it is my senses I make my God, Phil. iii. 19. Do I aim at popular applause, or worldly advancements? or, do I aim at my own health or life? these are my Gods. For what is worshipping, but making all the powers of my soul, and actions of my body, to bow and stoop to them? Hence it is, that the most high God, who hath said, *he will not give his glory to another*, hath been so express in commanding me to do all things to his glory; *whether ye eat or drink*, says the apostle, *or whatsoever ye do, do all things to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31.

But how can I, poor worm, be said to do any thing to the glory of the eternal God? Why, in the same manner as he is said to do what he doth, for his own glory. And how is that? By manifesting his glory unto others. Thus, if I can but so live and act, as thereby to evidence, that the God I serve is a glorious God, glorious in holiness, glorious in goodness, glorious in wisdom, glorious in power, and the like; this is doing all things to the glory of God. For example, by praying to God, I avouch him to be a God infinite in knowledge, that he is present with me, and hears me pray, wheresoever I am; and I own him to be infinite in mercy, in that he will suffer such a sinful creature as I am to address myself to him, &c. And so there is not the least action I undertake, but I am so to manage it, as to manifest the glory of God by it, making it my end and design so to do; otherwise, let me do what I will, I am sure to sin; for though, I confess, a good end can never make a bad action good, yet a bad end will always make a good action bad: so that, as ever I would do any thing that is good, I must be sure to do it to the glory of God.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to mingle such recreations with my business, as to further my business by my recreations.

HAVING wholly devoted myself to God, all I have, or am, is still to be improved for him; insomuch that was it not for the necessities of nature, every moment of my life should, and ought to be spent in the immediate worship and service of him. But though nature requires some time from my solemn serving of him, for the recreating of myself; yet grace requireth, that this recreating of myself should still be for the promoting his service; so that my recreations do not only fit me for farther service, but they, in themselves, should be, some way or other, serviceable to him; which that they may be, I must have as great a care in the choice, as in the use of my recreations.

There are some recreations that are so far from conducing to his service, that they may make more for the incensing of his wrath; as drinking and gaming, which, though in themselves lawful, yet, as they often prove an occasion of swearing, lying, cheating, and contention amongst men, and, by consequence, of wrath in God; so they ought, by all means, to be shunned and avoided. Indeed, it may be questioned, whether gaming be ever a lawful recreation: for either it is a lottery, or not. If it be a lottery, it is not lawful, because it is a great presumption and sin to set God at work to recreate ourselves; for poor nothings to employ the chiefest good, immediately to determine such frivolous and trifling impertinencies. If it be not a lottery, then it is not a pure recreation; for if it depends upon man's wit and study, it exercises his brain and spirits as much as if he was about other things: so that being, on one side, not lawful; on the other side, no recreation; it can, on no side, be a lawful recreation.

For, what is the end of recreation, but to revive my languishing spirits, to let them rest and be quiet a little, when they are tired with too much exercise, that they may be fresher, livelier, and fitter for work afterwards? Hence it is, that God indeed hath provided a recreation for all sensible creatures; sleep, which is the rest of the spirits in the nerves. When the little animal spirits have been, all the day, running up and down upon the soul's errands, then, to lie down still and quiet, is a great refreshment and revivement to them, pro-

vided still that it be moderately used. Whereas, the indulging ourselves too much in it, is rather a clogging and stupifying of them; as we see in our bodies, which, when not accustomed to, are most averse from, and unfit for exercise.

So that the chief and only time for recreation is when 'my spirits are either weary with labour and study, or else called in to some necessary employment in some other place; as at and after meals, especially such as are of a hard digestion; for then the spirits have enough to do, to turn the food we eat into good nourishment. And therefore the intenseness of study, running, wrestling, and such-like violent exercises, are not proper at such a time; because, as in studying, we draw the spirits from the stomach to the head; so, in the other exercises, such as moderate walking, conference, and free discourse, about common but necessary points, we send them from the stomach into other parts of the body, where they are to be set on work.

But that which I have found the best recreation, both to my body and mind, whensoever either of them stands in need of it, is music, which exercises at once both my body and my soul; especially when I play myself. For then, methinks, the same motion that my hand makes upon the instrument, the instrument makes upon my heart; it calls in my spirits, composes my thoughts, delights my ear, recreates my mind, and so not only fits me for after-business, but fills my heart, at the present, with pure and useful thoughts; so that when the music sounds the sweetliest in my ears, truth commonly flows the clearest into my mind. And hence it is, that I find my soul is become more harmonious, by being accustomed so much to harmony, and so averse to all manner of discord, that the least jarring sounds, either in notes or words, seem very harsh and unpleasant to me.

That there is something more than ordinary in music, appears from David's making use of it, for driving away the evil spirit from Saul, and Elisha, for the bringing of the good spirit upon himself. From which I am induced to believe, that there is really a sort of secret and charming power in it, that naturally dispels from the mind all or most of those black humours, which the evil spirit uses to brood upon, and, by composing it into a more regular, sweet, and docible disposition, renders it fitter for the Holy Spirit to work upon, the more susceptible of divine grace, and more faithful messenger, whereby to convey truth to the understanding. But however that be, I must necessarily acknowledge, that of all recreations, this is by far the more suitable to my temper and disposition,

in that it is not only an exercise to my body, but to my mind too ; my spirits being therefore made the more nimble and active, and, by consequence, the fitter to wait upon my soul, and be employed, by her, in whatsoever business she is engaged.

But in this, and all other recreations, I must always take care not to exceed my measure, either in point of time, or intention ; I must not follow them too close, nor spend too many hours in them, but still resolve to use them, as that they may not become a snare to me, but answer the ends for which they were designed, that when God shall call me to it, I may give him as good an account of my recreations, as of my necessary duties.

CONCERNING MY RELATIONS.

BUT be not deceived, O my soul ; thou art not yet advanced far enough : it is not sufficient to pretend to holiness in my thoughts and affections, and in my words and actions, unless I express it likewise in all the relations and conditions of life. The *commandments of God* are said to be *exceeding broad* ; they extend themselves to every capacity I can possibly be in, not only enjoining me to live soberly, in respect to myself, but righteously to my neighbour, obediently to my sovereign, lovingly to my wife, and faithfully to my people ; otherwise I cannot live holily unto God. And, therefore, if I would be thoroughly religious, I must farther endeavour to fix my resolutions with regard to the several duties the Most High expects from me, in all these particular relations I bear to him, during my sojourning here on earth.

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to honour and obey the king, or prince, whom God is pleased to set over me, as well as to expect he should safeguard and protect me, whom God is pleased to set under him.

THE King of kings, and Lord of lords, the great and glorious Monarch of all the world, having enacted many gracious laws, is pleased to set over every kingdom and nation such persons as may put them in execution. So that I cannot but

look upon a lawful king, as truly a representative of the most high God, as a parliament is of the people; and am therefore persuaded, that whosoever rebels against him, rebels against God himself; not only in that he rebels against the ordinance of God, and so against the God of that ordinance; but because he rebels against him whom God hath set up as his vicegerent, to represent his person and execute his laws in such a part of his dominions.

Hence it is, that these two precepts, *fear God*, and *honour the king*, are so often joined together in holy writ; for he that fears God's power, cannot but honour his authority; and he that honours not the king, that represents God, cannot be said to fear God, who is represented by him. And hence, likewise, it is, that God hath been as strict and express in enjoining us obedience to our governors, as to himself: for, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Rom. xiii. 1. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* Why? because *there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.*

And he has denounced as great a judgment against such as rebel against the magistrate he hath ordained, as against those that rebel against himself: *for, whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation,* ver. 2. So that the wrath of God shall as certainly fall upon those that rise up against the king, as upon those that fight against God. And no wonder that the punishment should be the same, when the fault is the same: for he that fights against the king, fights against God himself, who hath invested him with that power and authority to govern his people, representing his own glorious majesty before them.

Upon this ground it is that I believe the wickedness of a prince cannot be a sufficient plea for the disobedience of his subjects; for it is not the holiness, but the authority of God that he represents, which the most wicked, as well as the most holy, person may be endowed with: and therefore when the Gospel first began to spread itself over the earth, though there was no Christian king, or supreme magistrate, of what title soever, to cherish and protect it; nay, though the civil powers were then the greatest enemies to it; yet even then were the disciples of Christ enjoined to *submit themselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake.*

Insomuch that did I live amongst the Turks, I should look upon it as my duty to obey the Grand Seignior, in all his lawful edicts, as well as the most Christian and pious king in the world. For, suppose a prince be never so wicked and never

so negligent in his duty of protecting me ; it doth not follow, that I must neglect mine of obeying him. In such a case, I have another duty added to this ; and that is, to pray for him ; and to intercede with God for his conversion ; for, thus hath the King of kings commanded, that *prayers, supplications, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made as for all men, so, more especially, for kings, and those that are in authority ; that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty*, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. So that whensoever I address to the court of heaven, I must be sure to remember my sovereign on earth, that God would be pleased to enable his servant to reign on earth, as himself doth in heaven, in righteousness and mercy. But especially, in case of any seeming or real default or defect, though I do not think it a subject's duty to judge or censure his sovereign's actions ; I am to be the more earnest in my prayers and intercessions for him ; but upon no account to fight or rebel against him.

And, if I am thus strictly obliged to honour, obey, and pray for, a bad prince, how much more should I pay those duties to one, who represents God, not only in his authority, but in his holiness too ? In this case, sure, as there is a double engagement to reverence and obedience, so I am doubly punishable, if I neglect to shew it, either to the prince himself, or those that are set under him ; for the same obligations that lie upon me, for my obedience to the king, bind me likewise to obey his inferior officers and magistrates, that act under him ; and that for this reason, because, as he represents God. so they represent him ; and, therefore, whatever they command in his name, I look upon it as much my duty to obey, as if it was commanded by his own mouth, and accordingly, do, from this moment, by the grace of God, resolve to put this duty in practice.

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the same divine grace, to be as constant in loving of my wife, as cautious in choosing her.

THOUGH it be not necessary for me to resolve upon marrying, yet it may not be improper to resolve, in case I should, to follow these rules of duty ; first, in the choice of a wife : and, secondly, in the affection that I ought to bear towards her.

As for the first, I shall always endeavour to make choice of such a woman for my spouse, who hath first made choice of Christ as a spouse for herself; that none may be made one flesh with me, who is not made one spirit with Christ my Saviour. For I look upon the image of Christ, as the best mark of beauty I can behold in her; and the grace of God, as the best portion I can receive with her. These are excellencies, which, though not visible to our carnal eyes, are nevertheless agreeable to a spiritual heart; and such as all wise and good men cannot choose but be enamoured with. For my own part, they seem to me such necessary qualifications, that my heart trembles at the thoughts of ever having a wife without them. What? Shall I marry one that is wedded already to her sins? or have possession of her body only, when the devil has possession of her soul? Shall such a one be united to me here, who shall be separated from me for ever hereafter, and condemned to scorch in everlasting burnings? No; if ever it be my lot to enter into that state, I beg of God, that he would direct me in the choice of such a wife only, to lie in my bosom here, as may afterwards be admitted to rest in Abraham's bosom to all eternity; such a one, as will so live, and pray, and converse with me upon earth, that we may both be entitled to sing, to rejoice, and be blessed together, forever, in heaven.

That this therefore may be my portion and felicity, I firmly resolve never to set upon such a design, before I have first solicited the throne of grace, and begged of my heavenly Father to honour me with the partnership of one of his beloved children; and shall afterwards be as careful and cautious as I can, never to fix my affections upon any woman for a wife, till I am thoroughly persuaded of the grounds I have to love her, as a true Christian.

If I could be thus happy, as to meet with a wife of these qualities and endowments, it would be impossible for me not to be hearty and sincere in my affection toward her, even though I had the greatest temptations to place them upon another: for, how could I choose but love her, who has God for her father, the church for her mother, and heaven for her portion; who loves God, and is beloved of him? Especially, when I consider, that thus to love her, will not only be my duty but my happiness too.

As to the duty, it is frequently inculcated in Scripture, that *husbands should love their wives*, and that not with a common love, but as *Christ loved his church*, Eph. v. 25. yea, as their *own body*, ver. 28. or, as *themselves*, ver. 33. and they are so

to love them, as not to be *bitter against them*, Col. iii. 19. not to be passionate or angry with them, upon every light matter, nor suffer their resentments to rise to that height, upon any occasions whatsoever, as to abate the least spark of conjugal affection towards them, but to *nourish and cherish them, even as the Lord the church*. In a word, to do all the kind offices they can for them, in their civil capacities, and to help and forward them, by all means possible, in the way that leads to heaven ; that as they are united in the flesh, so they may likewise be united in the Spirit, and raised and rewarded together, at the general resurrection.

And, as love is the great duty, so is it likewise the chief happiness of a married state. I do not mean that love whereby she loves me, but that wherewith I love her ; for, if I myself have not a cordial esteem and affection for her, what happiness will it be to me to be beloved by her ? or rather, what a misery would it be to be forced to live with one I know I cannot love ? As ever, therefore, I desire to be happy, I must perform my duty in this particular, and never aim at any other end in the choice of a wife, or expect any other happiness in the enjoyment of her, but what is founded in the principle of pure and inviolable love. If I should court and marry a woman for riches, then, whenever they fail, or take their flight, my love and my happiness must drop and vanish together with them. If I choose her for beauty only, I shall love her no longer than while that continues, which is only till age or sickness blasts it, and then farewell at once both duty and delight.

But if I love her for her virtues, and for the sake of God, who has enjoined it as a duty, that our affections should not be alienated or separated by any thing but death ; then, though all the other sandy foundations fail, yet will my happiness remain entire, even though I should not perceive those mutual returns of love, which are due to me from her upon the same bottom. But oh ! the happiness of that couple, whose inclinations to each other are as mutual as their duties ; whose affections as well as persons are linked together with the same tie ! This is the chief condition required to make the state of matrimony happy or desirable, and shall be the chief motive with me to induce me to enter into it. For though it be no happiness to be beloved by one I do not love, yet it is certainly a very great one to be beloved by one I do. If this then be my lot, to have mutual expressions of love from the person I fix my affections upon, what joy and comfort will it raise in my heart ? With what peace and amity shall we live together here ? and what glory and felicity may we not promise ourselves hereafter ?

What is said here of the duty in choosing and loving of a wife, may be likewise applied to the woman's duty in choosing and loving her husband. But being not so immediately concerned in this, I pass on to my next resolution.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do my endeavour to give to God whatsoever children he shall be pleased to give to me; that as they are mine by nature, they may be his by grace.

I HAVE sometimes wondered at the providence of God, in bringing so many millions of people out of the loins of one man; and cannot but make this use of it, even to stir up myself to a double diligence, in bringing up my children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. For, who knows, but the salvation of ten thousand souls may depend upon the education of one single child?

If I train up my son in the ways of religion, and teach him what it is to *keep a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man*; he will then not only have an inward sense of his own duty, but take all possible care to instil it into others, whether children or servants, that are committed to his charge: and these, again, will do the same to theirs, by teaching them to walk in the same path; till, by degrees, the piety and holiness of one man has diffused itself to all succeeding generations. But now, on the other hand, if I neglect the care of my son's education, and suffer the leprosy of sin and wickedness to taint and corrupt him, it is great odds, without an extraordinary interposition of divine grace, but the infection may spread itself over all my posterity; and so draw down upon me the curses and accusations of ten thousand souls in hell, which might otherwise have been praising and blessing God for me to all eternity in heaven.

Hence it is that I am resolved to endeavour to be a spiritual as well as a natural father to my children; yea, to take more care to get a portion for their souls in heaven, than to make provision for their bodies upon earth. For, if he be accounted *worse than an infidel, that provides not for his family* the sustenance of their bodies; what is he that suffers his family to neglect the salvation of their souls?

That nothing of this, therefore, may be laid to my charge, if ever Providence sees fit to bless me with children of my own,

I will take effectual care, so soon as conveniently I can, to devote them unto God by baptism, that what guilt they have contracted, by coming through my loins, may be washed away by the laver of regeneration ; and then to be constantly soliciting the throne of grace, that he who hath given them to me, would be pleased to give himself to them.

The next thing to be done, as soon as they come to be capable of instruction, is, to take all occasions, and make use of all means, to work the knowledge of God into their heads, and the grace of Christ into their hearts ; by teaching them to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth* ; by acquainting them with the duties that he that made them expects from them ; with the rewards they shall have, if dutiful, and the punishments they shall feel, if disobedient, children ; still accommodating my expressions to the shallow capacity of their tender years. And, according to their doing, or not doing, of what they have been told, I shall reward them with what is most pleasing, or punish them with what is most displeasing, to their years. To speak to them of heaven, and eternal glory, will not encourage them so much, as to give them their childish pleasures and desires ; and the denouncing of a future hell will not affright them so much, as the inflicting a present smart. Hence it is, that Solomon so oft inculcates this upon parents, as their duty to their children, that they should not *spare the rod, lest they spoil the child*.

But I must still take care to let them understand, that what I do is from a principle of love and affection to them, not of fury and indignation against them. For, by this means, God may correct me for correcting them ; I may set before my children such an example of indiscreet and sinful passion, as they will be apt enough to learn, without my teaching them. On the other hand, it behoves me, if possible, so to order my family, that my children may not see or hear, and so not learn, any thing but goodness in it ; for commonly, according to what we learn when we are young, we practise when we are old. And, therefore, as I shall take great care that my children learn nothing that is evil or sinful at home, so likewise, that they do not come into such company abroad, where their innocence may be assaulted with swearing, cursing, or any kind of profane or obscene discourse, which the generality of our youth are so obnoxious to.

Or, at least, if this is not wholly to be avoided, to prevent these poisonous weeds from taking root in the heart, it behoves me to take all opportunities of discoursing to them of God and Christ, of the immortality of their souls, and the fu-

ture state they are to be doomed to in another world, when they have lived a little while in this ; that, according as they grow in years, they may *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Christ*. And when they come to years of discretion, capable of doing farther honour and service to God and their country, by some calling or profession, I must be sure to place them in such a one, as may be no hindrance to that high and heavenly calling, which they have in Christ Jesus, but rather contribute to further and promote it ; that being, like tender plants, ingrafted into the true vine, they may bring forth much fruit to God's glory, to my comfort, and their own salvation.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do my duty to my servants, as well as expect they should do theirs to me.

IT was Joshua's, and, by God's grace, it shall be my resolution, that *I and my house will serve the Lord*. I, in the first place, and then my house ; for if I myself do not, I cannot expect that they should. So that, for the ordering of my family in general, I must not only press their duty upon them, but likewise practise my own duty, in suppressing all vicious and lewd conversation, and composing all strife and contention amongst them ; in praying every day, at the least, twice with them ; in catechizing and expounding the principles of religion to them, and in calling for an account of every sermon and godly discourse they hear, either in private or in public ; in seeing that they constantly frequent the divine ordinances, and that they behave themselves so conscientiously therein, that they may be, some way or other, the better by them. And to these ends, I think it my duty to allow my servants some time, every day, wherein to serve God, as well as to see they spend their other hours in serving me ; and to make them sensible, that they do not serve me only for myself, but ultimately and principally in reference unto God ; their serving me making way for my better serving God.

And, for this reason, I cannot believe but it is as great a sin to cumber my servants, as myself, with too much worldly business. For, how can they spend any time in the service of God, when I require all their time in my own ? And, how justly should I be condemned, if, by this means, I should bring them

into a sort of necessity of sinning, either in not obeying God, or not obeying me. Not that I think it a servant's duty, to neglect his Creator to serve his master; on the contrary, he is obliged, in all cases, where their commands interfere, to *obey God rather than man*. But where they do not, there is a strict injunction upon all servants, that they should be *obedient to their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ*, Eph. vi. 5. But how with fear and trembling? Why, fearing lest they should offend God, in offending them, and trembling at the thoughts of being disobedient to the divine command, which enjoins them to *be obedient to their masters in all things, not answering again*, Tit. ii. 9. that is, not repining at their master's lawful commands, nor muttering and maundering against them as some are apt to do. For it is as great a sin in servants to speak irreverently to their masters, as in masters to speak passionately to their servants.

But how are servants to give obedience to their masters, with *singleness of heart, as unto Christ*? Why, by obeying them only in obedience unto Christ; that is, they are therefore to do their master's will, because it is the Lord's will they should do it; serving them, *not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men*, Eph. vi. 6, 7. Col. iii. 22. This is the duty therefore that I shall be oft inculcating upon my servants, and shall as oft be reflecting upon myself, that what I require for my own service may be always in subordination to God's, who is our common Lord and Master, whose laws are equally obliging to all ranks and conditions of men, and in whose sight *there is no respect of persons*.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to feed the flock, that God shall set me over, with wholesome food, neither starving them by idleness, poisoning them with error, nor puffing them up with impertinencies.

AND here I cannot but declare, that ever since I knew what it was to study, I have found, by experience, that spiritual and intellectual pleasures do as far surpass those that are temporal and sensual, as the soul exceeds the body. And for this reason,

as I always thought the study and profession of divinity to be the noblest and most agreeable of all others, as carrying with it its own encouragement and reward; so I have often wondered with myself, that the greatest persons in the world should not be desirous and ambitious of exercising their parts in the study of this necessary, as well as sublime, science, and even devoting themselves to the profession of it. For do they aspire after honour? What greater honour can there be than to be the mouth of God to the people, and of the people unto God; to have the Most High himself not only to speak by them, but in them too? What greater honour, than to have a commission from the King of kings, to represent himself before his people, and call upon them, in his name, to *turn from the error of their ways*, and walk in the paths of God to everlasting glory? What greater honour, than to be an instrument, in his hand, to bring poor souls from the gates of hell, to set them among princes in the court of heaven? Do they thirst after pleasures? What greater pleasure can they have, than to make it their business to feed themselves and others with the bread and water of life?

But stay, my soul, let not thy thoughts run only upon the dignity of thy function, and the spiritual pleasures that attend the faithful discharge of it; but think, likewise, upon the strict account thou must give of it in another life: the serious consideration of which, as it cannot but be a great comfort to the true and faithful pastor, who has diligently fed his flock with the *sincere milk of God's word*; so must it be a great terror and confusion to the slothful and negligent, the false and deceitful dispensers of the divine mysteries, who have either carelessly lost, or treacherously deluded, the souls of those committed to their charge, which they must one day answer for, as well as for their own. And therefore, that nothing of this kind may ever be laid to my charge, I solemnly promise and resolve, before God, so to demean myself in the exercise of my ministerial function, as to make the care of souls, especially of those committed to my charge, the chief study and business of my life.

And that without partiality or exception, I must not single out some of the best of my flock, such as I have the highest respect for, or have received the greatest obligations from; but *minister to every one according to their several necessities*. If I meet with men of knowledge and virtue, my business must be to confirm and establish them therein; if with those that are ignorant and immoral, to teach and instruct them in the ways of religion, and, by all means possible, to reclaim and

reduce them to the exercise of their duty, always remembering, that as the blessed Jesus, the *great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, was not sent, save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*; so it is the indispensable duty of his apostles and ministers (and, by the grace of God, I shall make it mine) to follow his example in this particular; to spare no time nor pains in the reformation of sinners, though it be never so irksome and difficult to accomplish, even though I should meet with such as the prophet David speaks of, *who hate to be reformed, and cast my words behind them*. And therefore, as I know it is my duty, so I shall always endeavour to take pleasure in the several offices I perform of this kind, to *strengthen the weak, heal the wounded, and bind up the broken heart*; to call in those that err and go astray, and *to seek and save those that are lost*.

To these ends, though preaching is, without doubt, a most excellent and useful, as well as necessary duty, (especially if it be performed, as it ought, with zeal and reverence, and the doctrine applied and pressed home with sincerity of affection,) yet I shall not think it sufficient to instruct my people only from the pulpit, but take all opportunities to instil good thoughts and principles into their minds in my private conversation. I know it is impossible for all ministers frequently to visit every particular person or family in their parish, there being in some parishes, especially in and about London, so many thousands of souls: but, howsoever, if it should please the Lord to call me to such a flock, though I cannot visit all, I shall visit as many as I can; especially those that are sick and infirm, and be sure to feed them *with the sincere milk of the word*, such as may turn to their spiritual nourishment, and make them *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. I will not fill their heads with speculative notions and niceties in divinity; (which among the less judicious, are very often the occasion of heresy and error, and sometimes also of delusion and distraction;) but my chief care shall be to instruct them in those necessary truths, which their Christian faith indispensably obliges them to know and believe, and press them to the performance of those duties, without which they cannot be saved; meekly and impartially reproofing the particular vices they are most inclined and addicted to, and cheerfully encouraging and improving whatever virtuous actions they are any of them exemplary in, and whatever good habits or inclinations the divine grace has put into their hearts.

And since love and charity is the great characteristic of our profession, the bond and cement of all other Christian duties,

in order to make my ministry the more successful, I resolve, in the last place, not only to avoid all differences and disputes with them myself, but amicably to compose all such as may arise among the neighbours. In a word, I shall make it my endeavour, in all things, so to approve myself as a faithful minister, both in life and doctrine, before them, that, at the last day, when the great God shall call for my parish, and myself to appear before him, I may be fitly prepared to give an account of both ; at least to answer for as many of them as he requires ; and may, with joy and comfort, pronounce this sentence of my Saviour, if it may, without offence, be applied to his ministers, *Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me.*

RESOLUTION VI.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be as faithful and constant to my friend, as I would have my friend to be faithful and constant to me.

HAVING before resolved to be zealous in loving God, I here resolve to be as constant in loving my friend. But why do I resolve upon this ? Is it possible to live, and not to love ? this to me seems as plain a contradiction, as to live, and not to live. For love, in my opinion, is as much the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body. So that, for my own part, I shall expect to cease to live, at the very moment that I cease to love ; nay, I do not look upon love only as my life, but as the joy and comfort of it too. And, for this reason, I shall never envy any man his riches, pleasures, or preferments, provided that I can but enjoy the persons my soul delights in, viz. Christ in the first place, and my friend and neighbour in the second.

But then I must have a great care where, and how, I place this affection ; for if I place it wrong, my very loving will be sinning. And therefore I shall always endeavour to make such only my friends, as are friends to God. Not that I look upon it as necessary to love my friends always under that notion only, as they are friends of God ; for then, no love but that which is spiritual would be lawful ; whereas, there is doubtless, a natural love, that is no less a duty, and, by consequence, no less lawful, than the other ; as the love of parents towards their children, and children towards their parents ; and the mutual complacency that arises betwixt friends, as

well as relations, from the harmony and agreement of humours and tempers. Thus our Saviour is said to have loved St. John more than any of his other disciples, which cannot be understood of a spiritual love; for this, undoubtedly, was equal to all; but being a man subject to the like passions (though not imperfections) as we are, he placed more natural affection upon, and might have more natural complacency in, John, than in his other disciples.

And, therefore, when I say, I am to make such my friends only as are friends to God, my meaning is, that I will make none my friends, but such as I know to be good men and good Christians, such as deserve my love in a spiritual, as well as a natural sense; and since I may lawfully love my friend in both these senses, the one is so far from being exclusive, that is is really perfective of the other. And for this reason, as the spiritual good of my friend is always to be preferred before that which is temporal, I am resolved to found the one upon the other. I will always be ready, as oft as he stands in need, either for my advice, encouragement, or assistance, to do him all the kind offices I can in his worldly affairs, to promote his interest, vindicate his character from secret aspersions, and defend his person from open assaults; to be faithful and punctual in the performance of my promises to him, as well as in keeping the secrets he has entrusted me with. But all these things are to be done with a tender regard to the honour of God, and the duties of religion; so that the services I do him in his temporal concerns must still be consistent with, and subservient to, the spiritual interest and welfare of his immortal soul, in which I am principally obliged to manifest my friendship towards him. If I see him wander out of the right way, I must immediately take care to advertise him of it, and use the best means I can to bring him back to it: or if I know him to be guilty of any reigning vices, I must endeavour to convince him of the danger and malignity of them, and importune and persuade him to amend and forsake them. And lastly, I must be as constant in keeping my friend, as cautious in choosing him; still continuing the heat of my affections towards him in the day of his affliction, as well as in the height of his prosperity.

These are the rules whereby I resolve to express my friendship unto others, and whereby I would have others to express their friendship unto me.

 CONCERNING MY TALENTS.

HAVING so solemnly devoted myself to God, according to the covenant he hath made with me, and the duty I owe to him; not only what I am, and what I do, but likewise what I have, is still to be improved for him. And this I am bound to, not only upon a federal, but even a natural account, for whatsoever I have, I received from him, and therefore all the reason in the world, whatsoever I have, should be improved for him. For I look upon myself as having no other property in what I enjoy, than a servant hath in what he is entrusted with to improve for his master's use. Thus, though I should have ten thousand pounds a year, I should have no more of my own than if I had but two-pence in all the world; for it is only committed to my care for a season, to be employed and improved to the best advantage, and will be called for again at the grand audit, when I must answer for the use or abuse of it; so that whatsoever, in a civil sense, I can call my own, that, in a spiritual sense, I must esteem as God's. And, therefore, it nearly concerns me to manage all the talents I am entrusted with, as things I must give a strict account for at the day of judgment. As God bestows his mercies upon me, through the greatness of his love and affection, so I am to restore his mercies back again to him, by the holiness of my life and conversation. In a word, whatever I receive from his bounty, I must, some way or other, lay out for his glory, accounting nothing mine own, any farther than as I improve it for God's sake, and the spiritual comfort of my own soul.

In order to this, I shall make it my endeavour, by the blessing of God, to put in practice the following Resolutions.

 RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, if possible, to redeem my time past, by using a double diligence for the future, to employ and improve all the gifts and endowments, both of body and mind, to the glory and service of my great Creator.

TIME, health, and parts, are three precious talents, generally bestowed upon men, but seldom improved for God. To go

no farther than myself; how much time and health have I enjoyed by God's grace? and how little of it have I laid out for his honour? On the contrary, how oft have I offended, affronted, and provoked him, even when he has been courting me with his favours, and daily pouring forth his benefits upon me? This, alas! is a sad truth, which whensoever I seriously reflect upon, I cannot but acknowledge the continuance of my life as the greatest instance of God's mercy and goodness, as well as the greatest motive to my gratitude and obedience. In a due sense, therefore, of the vanities and follies of my younger years, I desire to take shame to myself for what is past, and do, this morning, humbly prostrate myself before the throne of grace, to implore God's pardon, and to make solemn promises and resolutions, for the future, to *cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light*; and not only so, but to redeem the precious minutes I have squandered away, by husbanding those that remain to the best advantage. I will not trifle and sin away my time in the pleasures of sense, or the impertinencies of business, but shall always employ it in things that are necessary and useful, and proportion it to the weight and importance of the work or business I engage myself in; allotting such a part of it for this business, and such a part for that, so as to leave no intervals for unlawful or unnecessary actions to thrust themselves in, and pollute my life and conversation.

For, since it has pleased God to favour me with the blessing of health, and I am not certain how soon I may be deprived of it, and thrown upon a bed of sickness, which may deprive me of the use of my reason, or make me incapable of any thing else but grappling with my distemper; it highly concerns me to make a due use of this blessing, while I have it; to improve these parts and gifts that God has endowed me with to the manifestation of his glory, the salvation of my soul, and the public good of the community whereof I am a member.

To these ends, it will be requisite for me frequently to consider with myself, which way my weak parts may be the most usefully employed, and to bend them to those studies or actions, which they are naturally the most inclined to and delighted in, with the utmost vigour and application; more particularly, in spiritual matters, to make use of all opportunities for the convincing others of God's love to them, and their sins against God, of their misery by nature, and happiness by Christ; and when the truth of God happens to be any ways traduced or opposed, to be as valiant in the defence of it, as its enemies

are violent in their assaults against it. And as I thus resolve to employ my inward gifts and faculties for the glory and service of God ; so,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the divine grace, to employ my riches, the outward blessings of Providence, to the same end ; and to observe such a due medium in the dispensing of them, as to avoid prodigality on the one hand, and covetousness on the other.

THIS, without doubt, is a necessary resolution, but is likewise very difficult to put in practice, without a careful observance of the following rules.

First, never to lavish out my substance, like the prodigal, in the revels of sin and vanity, but, after a due provision for the necessities and conveniencies of life, to lay up the overplus for the acts of love and charity toward my indigent brethren. I must consider the uses and ends for which God has entrusted me with such and such possessions ; that they were not given me for the pampering my body, the feeding my lusts, or puffing me up with pride and ambition ; but for advancing his glory and my own, and the public good. But why do I say given ? when, as I before observed, I have no propriety in the riches I possess ; they are only lent me for a few years, to be dispensed and distributed as my great Lord and Master sees fit to appoint, viz. for the benefit of the poor and necessitous, which he has made his deputies, to call for and receive his money at my hands. And this, indeed, is the best use I can put it to, for my own advantage as well as theirs : for the money I bestow upon the poor I give to God to lay up for me, and I have his infallible word and promise for it, that it shall be paid me again, with unlimited interest, out of his heavenly treasure, which is infinite, eternal, and inexhaustible. Hence it is, that whensoever I see any fit object of charity, methinks I hear the Most High say unto me, Give this poor brother so much of my stock which thou hast in thy hand, and I will place it to thy account, as given to myself ; and, *Look what thou layest out, and it shall be paid thee again.*

The second rule is, never to spend a penny where it can be better spared ; nor to spare it where it can be better spent. And this will oblige me, whensoever any occasion offers of laying out money, considerably to weigh the circumstances of

it, and, according as the matter, upon mature deliberation, requires, I must not grudge to spend it : or, if at any time I find more reason to spare, I must not dare to spend it ; still remembering, that as I am strictly to account for the money God has given me, so I ought neither to be covetous in saving or hoarding it up, nor profuse in throwing it away, without a just occasion. The main thing to be regarded is, the end I propose to myself in my expenses, whether it be really the glory of God, or my own carnal humour and appetite. For instance, if I lay out my money in clothing my body, the question must be, whether I do this only for warmth and decency, or to gratify my pride and vanity. If the former, my money is better spent ; if the latter, it is better spared than spent. Again ; do I lay it out in eating and drinking ? If this be only to satisfy the necessaries of nature, and make my life the more easy and comfortable, it is, without doubt, very well spent ; but if it be to feed my luxury and intemperance, it is much better spared ; better for my soul in keeping it from sin, and better for my body in preserving it from sickness. And this rule is the more strictly to be observed, because it is as great a fault in a servant not to lay out his master's money when he should, as to lay it out when he should not.

In order, therefore, to avoid both these extremes, there is a third rule to be observed under this Resolution ; and that is, to keep a particular account of all my receipts and disbursements ; to set down in a book every penny I receive at the hands of the Almighty, and every penny I lay out for his honour and service. By this means I shall be, in a manner, forced both to get my money lawfully, and to lay it out carefully ; for how can I put that amongst the money I have received from God, which I have got by unlawful means ? Certainly, such money I may rather account as received from the devil for his use, than from God for his. And so must I either lay every penny out for God, or otherwise I shall not know where to set it down ; for I must set down nothing but what I lay out for his use ; and if it be not for his use, with what face can I say it was ? And, by this means also, when God shall be pleased to call me to an account for what I received from him, I may with comfort appear before him ; and having improved the talents he had committed to my charge, I may be received into his heavenly kingdom, with a *well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into thy Master's joy.*

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve the authority God gives me over others, to the suppression of vice, and the encouragement of virtue; and so, for the exaltation of God's name on earth, and their souls in heaven.

THAT all power and authority hath its original from God, and that one creature is not over another, but by the providence and will of him who is over all; and, by consequence, that all the authority we have over men is to be improved for God, is clear, not only from that question, *Who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou which thou didst not receive?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. but likewise, and that more clearly, from that positive assertion, *The powers that be are ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 1. That therefore I may follow my commission, I must stick close to my present resolution, even in all the power God gives me, to behave myself as one invested with that power from above, to restrain vice and encourage virtue, as oft as I have an opportunity so to do, always looking upon myself as one commissioned by him, and acting under him. For this reason, I must still endeavour to exercise my authority, as if the most high God was in my place in person as well as power. I must not follow the dictates of my own carnal reason, much less the humours of my own biassed passion, but still keep to the acts which God himself hath made, either in the general statute-book for all the world, the holy Scriptures, or in the particular laws and statutes of the nation wherein I live.

And, questionless, if I discharge this duty as I ought, whatever sphere of authority I move in, I am capable of doing a great deal of good, not only by my power, but by my influence and example. For common experience teaches us, that even the inclinations and desires of those that are eminent for their quality or station, are more powerful than the very commands of God himself: especially among persons of an inferior rank and more servile disposition, who are apt to be more wrought upon by the fear of present punishment, or the loss of some temporal advantage, than any thing that is future or spiritual. Hence it is, that all those whom God entrusteth with this precious talent, have a great advantage and opportunity in their hands, for the suppressing sin, and exalting holiness in the world; a word from their mouths against whoredom, drunkenness, profanation of the sabbath, or the like: yea,

their very examples and silent gestures, being able to do more than the threatenings of Almighty God, either pronounced by himself in his word, or by his ministers in his holy ordinances.

This, therefore, is my resolution, that whatsoever authority the most high God shall be pleased to put upon me, I will look upon it as my duty, and always make it my endeavour, to demolish the kingdom of sin and satan, and establish that of Christ and holiness in the hearts of all those to whom my commission extends ; looking more at the duty God expects from me, than at the dignity he confers upon me. In a word, I will so exercise the power and authority God puts into my hands here, that when the particular circuit of my life is ended, and I shall be brought to the general assize, to give an account of this amongst my other talents, I may give it up with joy ; and so exchange my temporal authority upon earth, for an eternal crown of glory in heaven.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the divine grace, to improve the affections God stirs up in others towards me, to the stirring up of their affections towards God.

If the authority I have over others, then, questionless, the affection others have to me, is to be improved for God ; and that because the affection they bear to me in a natural sense hath a kind of authority in me over them in a spiritual one. And this I gather from my own experience ; for I find none to have a greater command over me, than they that manifest the greatest affections for me. Indeed, it is a truth generally agreed on, that a real and sincere esteem for any person, is always attended with a fear of displeasing that person ; and where there is fear in the subject, there will, doubtless, be authority in the object ; because fear is the ground of authority, as love is, or ought to be, the ground of that fear. The greatest potentate, if not feared, will not be obeyed ; if his subjects stand in no awe of him, he can never strike any awe upon them. Nor will that awe have its proper effects in curbing and restraining them from sin and disobedience, unless it proceeds from, and is joined with, love.

I know the Scripture tells me, *There is no fear in love, but that perfect love casteth out fear*, 1 John iv. 18. But that is to be understood of our love to God, not to men, and that a per-

fect love too, such as can only be exercised in heaven. There, I know, our love will be consummate, without mixture as well as without defect; there will be a perfect expression of love on both sides, and so no fear of displeasure on either. But this is a happiness which is not to be expected here on earth; so long as we are clothed with flesh and blood, we shall, in one degree or other, be still under the influence of our passions and affections. And, therefore, as there is no person we can love upon earth, but who may sometimes see occasion to be displeased with us, so he will always, upon this account, be feared by us. This I look upon as the chief occasion of one man's having so much power and influence over another.

But how comes this under the notion of a talent received from God, and so to be improved for him? Why, because it is he, and he alone, that kindles and blows up the sparks of pure love and affection in us, and that by the breathings of his own Spirit. It was the Lord that gave Joseph favour in the sight of the *keeper of the prison*, Gen. xxxix. 21. and that brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the *prince of the eunuchs*, Dan. i. 9. And so of all others in the world; for we are told elsewhere, that as *God fashioneth the hearts of men*, so *he turneth them which way soever he will*. Insomuch that I can never see any express their love to me, but I must express my thankfulness to God for it: nor can I feel in myself any warmth of affection towards others, without considering it as a talent hid in my breast, which I am obliged in duty to improve for him, by stirring up their affections unto him, whose affections himself hath stirred up toward me. And this will be the more easy to effect, if I take care, in the first place, to express the zeal and sincerity of my own love to God, by making him the chief object of my esteem and adoration, and manifest my aversion to the sins they are guilty of, by representing them as most loathsome and abominable, as well as most dangerous and damnable. For, wherever there is a true and cordial affection to any person, it is apt to bias those that are under the influence of it, to choose the same objects for their love or aversion, that such a person does, *i. e.* to love what he loves, and hate what he hates. This therefore is the first thing to be done, to stir up the affections of others, to love and serve God.

Another way of my improving the affections of others to this end is by setting them a good example; for commonly what a friend doth, be it good or bad, is pleasing to us, because we look not at the goodness of the thing which is done, but at the loveliness of the person that doth it. And if the vices of

a friend seem amiable, how much more will his virtues shine? For this reason, therefore, whensoever I perceive any person to show a respect for, or affection to me, I shall always look upon it as an opportunity put into my hands to serve and glorify my great Creator, and shall look upon it as a call from heaven, as much as if I heard the Almighty say to me, I desire to have this person love me, and therefore have I made him to love thee; do thou but set before him an example of goodness and virtue, and his love to thy person shall induce and engage him to direct his actions according to it. This, therefore, is the rule that I fully resolve to guide myself by, with relation to those who are pleased to allow me a share in their esteem and affection, which I hope to improve to their advantage in the end: that as they love me, and I love them now, so we may all love God, and God love us to all eternity.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve every good thought to the producing of good affections in myself, and as good actions with respect to God.

WHATSOEVER comes from God, being a talent to be improved to him, I cannot but think good thoughts to be as precious talents as it is possible a creature can be blessed with. But let me esteem them as I will, I am sure my Master will reckon them amongst the talents he entrusted me with, and will call me to an account for, and therefore I ought not to neglect them. The Scripture tells me, *I am not sufficient of myself to think any thing as of myself, but that my sufficiency is of God,* 2 Cor. iii. 5.

And if I be not sufficient to think any thing, much less am I able of myself to think of that which is good; forasmuch as to good thoughts there must always be supposed a special concurrence of God's Spirit; whereas to other thoughts there is only the general concurrence of his presence. Seeing, therefore, they come from God, how must I lay them out for him? Why, by sublimating good thoughts into good affections. Does God vouchsafe to send down into my heart a thought of himself? I am to send up this thought to him again, in the fiery chariot of love, desire, and joy. Doth he dart into my soul a thought of holiness and purity? I am to dwell and meditate

upon it, till it break out into a flame of love and affection for him. Doth he raise up in my spirit a thought of sin, and show me the ugliness and deformity of it? I must let it work its desired effect, by making it as loathsome and detestable, as that thought represents it to be.

But good thoughts must not only be improved to produce good affections in my heart, but likewise good actions in my life. So that the thoughts of God should not only make me more taken with his beauty, but more active for his glory; and the thoughts of sin should not only damp my affection to it, but likewise deter and restrain me from the commission of it.

And thus, every good thought that God puts into my heart, instead of slipping out, as it does with some others, without regard, will be cherished and improved to the producing of good actions. These actions will entitle me to the blessings of God, and that to the kingdom of glory.

RESOLUTION VI.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve every affliction God lays upon me, as an earnest or token of his affection towards me.

EVERY thing that flows from God to his servants, coming under the notion of talents, to be improved for himself, I am sure, afflictions as well as other mercies, must needs be reckoned amongst those talents God is pleased to vouchsafe. Indeed, it is a talent, without which I should be apt to forget the improvement of all the rest; and which, if well improved, itself will *work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 1, 7. It is the non-improvement of an affliction that makes it a curse; whereas, if improved, it is as great a blessing as any God is pleased to scatter amongst the children of men. And therefore it is that God most frequently entrusteth this precious talent with his own peculiar people: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for your iniquities*, Amos iii. 2. Those that God knows the best, with them will he entrust the most, if not of other talents, yet, be sure, of this, which is so useful and necessary to bring us to the knowledge of ourselves and our Creator, that without it we should be apt to forget both.

It is this that shows us the folly and pride of presumption, as well as the vanity and emptiness of all worldly enjoyments; and deters us from incensing and provoking him, from whom all our happiness as well as our afflictions flow. Let, therefore, what crosses or calamities soever befall me, I am still resolved to bear them all, not only with a patient resignation to the divine will, but even to comfort and rejoice myself in them, as the greatest blessings. For instance, am I seized with pain and sickness? I shall look upon it as a message from God, sent on purpose to put me in mind of death, and to convince me of the necessity of being always prepared for it, by a good life, which a state of uninterrupted health is apt to make us unmindful of. Do I sustain any losses or crosses? The true use of these is to make me sensible of the fickleness and inconstancy of this world's blessings, which we can no sooner cast our eye upon, but they immediately *take to themselves wings, and fly away* from us. And so all other afflictions God sees fit to lay upon me may, in like manner, be some way or other improved for my happiness.

But, besides the particular improvements of particular chastisements, the general improvement of all is the increasing of my love and affection to that God, who brings these afflictions upon me. For how runs the mittimus, whereby he is pleased to send me to the dungeon of afflictions? *Deliver such an one to Satan to be buffeted in the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. v. 5. By this it appears, that the furnace of afflictions, which God is pleased, at any time, to throw me into, is not heated at the fire of his wrath, but at the flames of his affection to me. The consideration whereof, as it should more inflame my love to him, so shall it likewise engage to express a greater degree of gratitude towards him, when he singles me out not only to suffer from him, but for him too. For this is an honour indeed, peculiar to the saints of God, which if he shall be pleased ever to prefer me to, I shall look upon it as upon other afflictions, to be improved for his glory, the good of others, and the everlasting comfort of my own soul.

Thus have I reckoned up the talents God hath, or may, put into my hands, to be improved for his glory. May the same divine Being that entrusted me with them, and inspired me with these good resolutions concerning them, enable me, by his grace, to make a due use of them, and carefully to put in practice what I have thus religiously resolved upon!

There are some other mercies, which might be set down

in the catalogue of talents ; as the graces and motions of God's holy Spirit, and the use of his holy ordinances, under the ministry of the Gospel ; but these being included and insisted on under several of the foregoing heads, will not require a distinct consideration.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPON A

CHRISTIAN LIFE;

OR,

NECESSARY DIRECTIONS

FOR ITS BEGINNING AND PROGRESS UPON EARTH,

IN ORDER TO ITS

FINAL PERFECTION IN THE BEATIFIC VISION.

PART II.

By WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

Written by him in his Riper Years, and printed from his original Manuscripts.

P R E F A C E.

THE kind reception which has been given to all the other works of this incomparable Author, particularly to his *Private Thoughts*, written in his younger years, has encouraged the publishing of another volume of his *Thoughts*, upon subjects of the most importance to the *Christian Life* in all the chief scenes of it; and those composed when age and experience in the course of his parochial ministry had taught him, what directions were most necessary for the conduct of every disciple of Christ, through all the stages of *that race which is set before us*, that he *so run that he may obtain*. Accordingly the reader is here furnished, not only with such instructions as are most proper for the entrance upon this race, and the early discipline of those who are new listed under Christ's banner; but also with such other points both of faith and practice, as are most fit to be afterwards inculcated and pressed upon them, for their successful carrying on of this holy warfare, and *finishing their course*, so as at last to attain the *crown of righteousness*, laid up for all those that *continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to their lives' end*.

As in his *Private Thoughts and Resolutions*, this excellent Bishop seems to have chiefly aimed at settling his own principles, and regulating his practice, as became a follower of the holy Jesus, and a minister of his Gospel: so in these which are more public, he carries on the same pious design with respect to others, and executes that sacred office for which those were to prepare him. Indeed, great and indefatigable as his labours were, (for few ever laboured more,) the end of them was always the salvation of souls. And as that spirit of piety which runs through all his writings, together with his plain, unaffected, familiar, and yet most solid way of argument and persuasion, are both admirably adapted to this great end; (to say nothing of all his other daily and unwearied pains in the ministry while living;) so, through God's great blessing upon his endeavours, they were then, and have been since, crowned with great success; and it is the hopes and prayers of all good

men, that they may continue so to be to the end of the world, and daily add to our holiness and his happiness.

Among many instances that might be given of this happy success, I have now one before me, in a relation of the behaviour of one of this vigilant pastor's flock, in his last sickness, as it is attested by an eye-witness of it. I will not trouble the reader with the particulars; the sum is, that this pious gentleman, with his last breath, expressed so much resignation to God's will, and so little fear of death; such comfort in reflecting upon the better part of his life, especially his charity to the poor; and so much zeal in recommending that duty to those about him; and, above all, such an anticipation of those ecstasies of joy and happiness which he was going to in another world, and so uncommon and enlarged an understanding of the great mysteries of religion; that if, in the midst of these holy raptures, he had not owned his great obligations to Dr. Beveridge for these spiritual blessings; yet we might have easily judged, that so great a proficient in the school of religion could be indebted, under God, to the care and instruction of no less a master for such extraordinary acquirements.

And, with respect to that good, which it is piously hoped this great Prelate's works have done since his death, and may continue to do daily, it has been observed by some devout persons, that since the publication of them, our churches have been generally fuller than they used to be; to which, as nothing would contribute more, than that spirit of devotion and true piety, which in all his practical writings this holy man both expresses himself, and labours to create in others: so, if after all these pious endeavours to cultivate and promote it in the world, we are sensible of the least growth of it, I know not why we may not ascribe so good an effect to the blessing of God upon so probable a cause.

However, if the piety of some among us, which we hope increaseth, be not a sufficient argument of a probable increase of true religion, to be expected from the influence of this great man's works, yet I am sorry to say, that the wickedness of others does abundantly make up that defect; I mean the restless endeavours of all the enemies of God and religion, to discredit and defame them; if by any means they could be able to ward such a blow to the kingdom of darkness, as they seem to apprehend from his pious labours. And what wonder if those who mock God, and would bring religion itself into contempt, use their utmost endeavours to blast the reputation of an author, whose writings are so eminently serviceable to religion, and tend so much to advance the glory of God? All

their attempts of this nature are so many arguments of the excellency of what they would decry; they are the testimonies even of enemies, in behalf of those admirable books which they pretend to ridicule; and all the scorn and contempt they express upon this occasion, reflects more honour upon Bishop Beveridge and his works; I had almost said, even than the approbation and esteem of all his and religion's friends. So much good does God in his infinite wisdom and mercy produce out of the greatest evil, by turning all the wit and malice of these reprobates against themselves, and making them, even against their own wills, instruments of sounding forth the praises of this excellent writer, at the same time, and by the very same means, that they vainly attempt to dishonour and reproach him. As the devils themselves were forced to own our blessed Saviour, though they knew he came on purpose to destroy them. It were only to be wished, that in this, as in most other instances, those *children of this world* were not *in their generation* so much *wiser than the children of light*. It is true, we may as well fear, that dogs should bark out the moon, as that the utmost malice of these enemies to truth shall ever be able to sully a reputation, that has long shined with so much brightness among all learned and good men, both at home and abroad: insomuch, that when this illustrious Prelate was dying, one of the chief of his order deservedly said of him, *There goes one of the greatest, and of the best men that ever England bred*. No, we have seen that all their attempts against him do but add lustre to his fame. However, it cannot be less the interest of religion to promote the works of so able a divine, than it is that of atheism and irreligion to oppose them; and if all good men would show as much zeal in the defence of them and their great author, and be as industrious to recommend both his writings and example, as atheists and libertines are to obstruct the influences of both, this would still be another addition to the glory of so great a name; and the good effects we might hope for, on the lives of men, from such excellent books, dispersed into many hands, would be, at once, the best attestation that could be given to the wondrous benefit and usefulness of them, and also the most effectual means to stop the mouths of gainsayers, by lessening the number of them daily, and bringing them over from infidelity and atheism, to the cause of God and religion.

And I cannot close this Preface better, than with earnest prayers to God, that this, and all the other works of Bishop Beveridge, may have that blessed effect; and that in return to all the malice of those, who seem to envy us the great

good we may hope for from such pious and instructive discourses, they may, by degrees, instil even into their breasts some of that spirit of piety, diffused though every page; and of atheists and libertines, make them sober men, and Christians.

THOUGHTS

UPON

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

IF the principles of the Christian religion were well rooted in the hearts of all mankind, what excellent fruit would they produce ! The earth would put on another face, bearing some resemblance of heaven itself : idolatry, with all sorts of wickedness and vice, would be every where discountenanced and suppressed ; for all would worship the one living and true God, and him only : there would be no more *wars*, nor *rumours of wars* ; *kingdom* would not rise *against kingdom*, nor *nation against nation* ; but all princes would be at peace with their neighbours, and their subjects at unity among themselves, striving about nothing but which should serve God best, and do most good in the world. Then piety, and justice, and charity, would revive and flourish again all the world over, and particularly in the church and kingdom to which we belong. Then the prayers would be read twice a day in every parish, as the law requires, and all people would heartily join together in offering them up to the almighty Creator of the world. Then all that are of riper years would, at least every Lord's day, celebrate the memory of the death of Christ, by which their sins are expiated, and the most high God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father : and as all sorts of people would thus continually worship God in his own house, so wheresoever they are, they would do all they could to serve and honour him : *Whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they would do all to his glory.* And as for their fellow-servants, they would all love as brethren, and every one seek another's good as well as their own ; *Whatsoever they would that men should do to them they would do the same to all other men.* In short, all would then deny *ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world, and so walk hand in hand together in the narrow way that leads to*

everlasting life. This would be the happy state of all mankind, if they were but well grounded in that religion which the eternal Son of God hath planted upon earth.

But not to speak of other people, we of this nation rarely find any such effect of this religion among ourselves ; though it be as generally professed, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any nation, there are but few that are ever the better for it ; the most being here also as bad both in their principles, and practices, as they which live in the darkest corners of the earth, where the light of the Gospel never yet shined : though the kingdom in general be Christian, there are many heathens in it, people that were never christened ; many that were once christened, and are now turned heathens again, living as *without God in the world* : many that would still be thought Christians, and yet have apostatized so far as to lay aside both the sacraments which Christ ordained, and every thing else that can shew them to be so ; many that privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and so bring upon themselves swift destruction ; many that follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the *way of truth is evil spoken of, and through covetousness with feigned words make merchandise of men*, as St. Peter foretold, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. *Many who will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ;* and so fulfil the prophecy of St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 3. And of those who still continue in the communion of the Church, and in the outward profession of the true Christian faith, *there are many who, although they profess to know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*, Tit. i. 16. Many, did I say ? I wish I could not say almost all : but alas ! it is too plain to be denied.

For, of that vast company of people that are called Christians in this kingdom, how few are there that live as becometh the Gospel of Christ ? that finish the work which God hath given them to do, even glorify him in the world ? How many that refuse or neglect to worship and serve him upon his own day ? How few that do it upon any other day, when they have any thing else to do ? How many that never received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in their whole lives ? How few that receive it above two or three times in the year, how often soever they are invited to it ? How many are the proud, the passionate, the covetous, the intemperate, the incontinent, the unjust, the profane and impious, in comparison of the humble, and meek, and liberal, and sober, and modest, and righteous,

and holy among us ? The disproportion is so vastly great, that none but God himself can make the comparison : so little of Christianity is now to be found amongst Christians themselves ; to our shame be it spoken.

It is indeed a matter of so much shame, as well as grief, to all that have any regard for the honour of Christ their Saviour, that they cannot but be very solicitous to know how it comes to pass, that his doctrine and precepts are so generally slighted and neglected as they are in our days ? and how they may be observed better for the future than now they are ? Both which questions may be easily resolved ; for we cannot wonder, that of the many which profess the Christian religion, there are so few that live up to it, when we consider how few are duly instructed in the first principles of it.

The religion which Christ hath revealed to the world, is by his grace and blessing settled and established among us, so as to be made the religion of the kingdom in general : and therefore all that are born in it, are, or ought to be, according to his order or institution, soon after baptized, and so made his disciples, or Christians by profession. And the church takes security of those who thus bring a child to be baptized, that when it comes to be capable of it, it shall be instructed in the Catechism, which she for that purpose hath set forth, containing all the principles of that religion into which it was baptized. But notwithstanding this hath been neglected for many years, whereby it is come to pass that the far greatest part of the people in this kingdom know little or nothing of the religion they profess, but only to profess it as the religion of the country where they live ; they may perhaps be very zealous for it, as all people are for the religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their lives according to it, because they were never rightly informed about it ; or, at least, not soon enough, before error or sin hath got possession of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it ; for they are always *as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 14. And whatsoever sin gets dominion over them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal bodies, so that they obey it in the lusts thereof, in spite of all that can be said to them out of God's own word ; for they are no way edified by any thing they hear, in that the foundation is not first laid upon which they should build up themselves in that most holy faith that is preached to them. The word they hear is as *seed that falls by the way side, or upon a rock, or else among*

thorns, and so never comes to perfection ; their hearts not being prepared beforehand, and rightly disposed for it, by having the principles of the doctrine of Christ first infused into them.

This therefore being the great cause of that shameful decay of the Christian religion that is so visible among us, we can never expect to see it repaired, unless the great duty of catechising be revived, and the laws that are made about it be strictly observed all the kingdom over, as most certainly they ought to be, not only as they are the laws both of the church and state under which we live, but likewise for that they are grounded upon the word of God himself, who expressly commands the same thing by his apostle, saying, *Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

For here, by *nurture*, we are to understand, as the Greek word *παιδεία* signifies, that discipline which parents ought to exercise over their children, to prevent their falling into, or continuing in any wicked course. And by the admonition of the Lord, is meant the catechising, or putting them in mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of what he would have them believe and do, that they may be saved. For the original word *νουθεσία* which we translate *admonition*, properly signifies *catechising*. (*κατηκίζειν νουθετεῖν*, *Hesych.*) And therefore to catechise or instruct children in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, is a duty here laid upon all parents by Almighty God himself; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord, by catechising or teaching them the principles of his religion, they all live in the breach of a plain law, a law made by the supreme Lawgiver of the world, and must accordingly answer for it at the last day.

Wherefore all that are sensible of the great account which they must give of all their actions, at that time, to the Judge of the whole world, cannot but make as much conscience of this as of any duty whatsoever, so as to use the utmost of their care and diligence, that their children may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so be *wise unto salvation*. Neither is this any hard matter for those to do, who live in the communion of the church, having such a catechism or summary of the Christian religion drawn up to their hands, which is easy both for parents to teach, and for children to learn : and yet so full and comprehensive, that it contains all things necessary for any man to know in order to his being saved. As you may clearly see if you do but cast your eye upon the method and contents of it, which may be all

reduced to these five heads ; the Baptismal Vow, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments ordained by our Lord Christ.

It begins where a child begins to be a Christian, and therefore hath a Christian name give him, even at his baptism, *wherein he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven* ; which great privileges belong to all that are baptized and to none else. None else being in the number of Christ's disciples ; for our Lord Christ, a little before his ascension into heaven, left orders with his apostles, and in them with all that should succeed in the ministry of the church to the end of the world, to make all nations his disciples, by baptizing them *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, as the original words plainly import, Matt. xxviii. 19. And therefore as people of all nations are capable of being made his disciples, so none now are, nor ever can be made so any other way, than by being baptized according to his order. But they who are not thus made his disciples by being baptized unto him, are not the members of Christ ; and if they be not the members of Christ, they cannot be the children of God, nor have any right to the kingdom of heaven, that being promised only to such as believe and are baptized, Mark xvi. 16. And our Saviour himself elsewhere also saith, *That except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. Whereby we may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament, where it may be had, as our church observes in the Office for the ministration of it to such as are of riper years.

It is to be farther observed, that when our Saviour ordained baptism to be the way or means of admitting persons into his church, or the congregation of his disciples, lest we should think, as some have done, that he meant it only of those who are of riper years, he used the most general terms that could be invented, requiring that all nations should be baptized ; and if all nations, then children also, which are a great, if not the greatest part of every nation. And accordingly his church hath always baptized children as well as adult persons : when any who were come to years of discretion were willing and desirous to become Christ's disciples, that they might learn of him the way to heaven, they were made so by being baptized ; and if they had children, they were also baptized at the same time with their parents : and so were the children which were afterwards born to them ; they also were baptized soon after they were born. And that it is our Saviour's pleasure that children also should be brought into his church, appears like-

in that when his disciples rebuked those who brought children to him, he was much displeas'd, and said unto them, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven*, Mark x. 14.

But seeing they who are thus baptized according to the institution of Christ, are thereby made his disciples, and in him the children of God, it is necessary they should then promise to believe, and live from that time forward according as he hath commanded; which promise therefore all that are grown up, always used to make every one in his own person, and for that purpose were, and ought to be catechised beforehand, and put in mind of what they were to promise when they were baptized; and therefore were called Catechumens. But children not being capable of making any such promise themselves in their own persons, they were always admitted and required to do it by their guardiâns, that is, by their godfathers and godmothers, which brought and offer'd them to be baptized; and are therefore oblig'd to take care that they be afterwards catechised, or instructed in the principles of that religion into which they were admitted, and put in mind of the promise which they then made of framing their lives according to it.

This promise therefore, which children make at their baptism by their sureties, and which is implied in the very nature of the sacrament, whether they have any sureties or no, consists of three general heads.

First, *That they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.*

Secondly, *That they will believe all the Articles of the Christian faith.*

Thirdly, *That they will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life.*

Which three things, under which the whole substance of the Christian religion is contained, being all promised by children when they are baptized into it, it is absolutely necessary that they be afterwards put in mind, as soon as they are capable, of the promise which they then made, and of the obligation which lies upon them to perform it: for otherwise it can never be expected that they should either do, or so much as know it; whereas the instructing them in this the first part of the Catechism, will prepare and dispose them for the the understanding all the rest.

Particularly the Apostles' Creed, which is next taught them, containing all those articles of the Christian faith, which they promise to believe, and nothing else; nothing but what is

grounded upon plain texts of Scripture, and hath been always believed by the whole catholic church, in all ages and places all the world over. Here are none of those private opinions and controverted points which have so long disturbed the church, and serve only to perplex men's minds, and take them off from the more substantial and necessary duties of religion, as we have found by woeful experience, which our church hath taken all possible care to prevent, by inserting no other articles of faith into the Catechism which her members are to learn, than what are contained in this Creed, received and approved of by the whole Christian world; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to *believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*, in whose name they were christened, and therefore must continue in this faith, or cease to be Christians.

The other thing which they who are baptized promise, is, *that they will keep God's commandments*, which therefore are next taught in the Catechism, without any mixture of human inventions or constitutions: those Ten Commandments, which the supreme Lawgiver himself proclaimed upon mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with his own finger upon two tables of stone. These they are all bound to learn, because they are bound to keep them all, as they will answer it at the last day, when all mankind shall be judged by them.

But no man can keep these commandments without God's special grace, which we have no ground to expect, without praying to him for it. And therefore children are in the next place taught how to pray according to that form which Christ himself composed, and commanded us to say, whensoever we pray, Luke xi. 2. And as he who believes all that is in the Apostles' Creed, believes all that he need believe; and he that keeps all the Ten Commandments, doth all that he need to do; so he that prays this prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of: so that in this short Catechism, which children of five years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them, either to believe, or do, or pray for.

The last part of the Catechism is concerning the two sacraments which Christ hath ordained in his church, as *generally necessary to salvation*; that is to say, *Baptism, and the Lord's Supper*: both which our church hath there explained with such extraordinary prudence and caution, as to take in all that is necessary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the disputes that have been raised about them, to the great prejudice of the Christian religion.

Seeing therefore this Catechism is so full, that it contains all

that any man needs to know, and yet so short, that a child may learn it : I do not see how parents can bring up their children in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, better than by instructing them in it. I do not say, by teaching them only to say it by rote, but by instructing them in it, so that they may understand, as soon and as far as they are capable, the true sense and meaning of all the words and phrases in every part of it ; for which purpose it will be necessary to observe these rules.

First, you must begin betime, before your children have got any ill habits, which may be easily prevented, but are not so easily cured. When children are baptized, being *born again of water and of the Spirit*, as the guilt of their original sin is washed away in the *laver of regeneration*, so that it will never be imputed to them, unless it break forth afterwards into actual transgressions ; so they receive also the Spirit of God to prevent all such eruptions, by enabling them to resist the *temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil*, to believe and serve God according as they then promised ; so far at least, that *sin shall not have dominion over them, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, seeing now they are not under the law, but under the grace of Christ*, Rom. vi. 12, 14. But that the seeds of grace which were then sown in their hearts may not be lost or stifled, but grow up to perfection ; great care must be taken that they may be taught so soon as they are capable to discern between good and evil, to avoid the evil and do the good, and to believe and live as they promised, when they were endued with grace to do it. *Hast thou children ?* saith the Son of Sirach, *instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth*, Eccus. vii. 23. Give thy son no liberty in his youth, and wink not at his follies. *Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the sides while he is a child ; lest he wax stubborn, and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart*, chap. xxx. 11, 12. Whereas *he that gathereth instruction from his youth, shall find wisdom till his old age*, chap. vi. 18. According to that of the wise man ; *Train up a child in the way that he should go ; and when he is old, he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 6. As *Timothy from a child had known the holy Scriptures*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And that was the reason that he was so expert in them when he became a man ; which therefore that your children may also be, the first thing they learn must be their Catechism, where they are taught all the great truths and duties that are revealed in the holy Scriptures, as necessary to salvation.

But how can such parents do this that cannot read, nor say the Catechism themselves ? 'This, I fear, is the case of too

many among us. There are many who, having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or think scorn to learn it afterwards, and so lose all the benefit and comfort which they might receive by reading of the holy Scriptures : but this, I confess, is not so necessary, especially in our church, where the holy Scriptures are so constantly read in public ; that if people would as constantly come and hearken to them, they might be *wise unto salvation*, although they cannot read, as few heretofore could, at least in the primitive times, when, notwithstanding they attained to the knowledge of God, and of their duty to him, as well as if they had been the greatest scholars in the world. But then, considering that they could not read, they supplied that defect by attending more diligently to what they heard out of God's holy word, and laying it up in their hearts, so that they understood all the principles of the Christian religion, and were able to instruct their children in the same, as well as if they could read. But this is not our case ; for now there are many who can neither read, nor so much as say the Catechism, having never learned it themselves, and therefore cannot possibly teach it their children. Such as the Apostle speaks of, who *when, for the time, they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again*, which be the first principles of the *oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat*, Heb. v. 12. And what must such do ? They certainly, as the tender their own good, must be doubly diligent in the use of all means that may tend to their edification and instruction : and as they desire the good of their children, they must send them to school, or provide some other person to teach them ; which if the parents neglect to do, the godfathers and godmothers of every child should put them in mind of it, and see that the child be taught, so soon as he is able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he made by them at his baptism. And that he may know these things the better, they must call upon him to hear sermons ; and chiefly they must provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, as they are contained in the Church Catechism, and then to bring them to the bishop to be confirmed by him.

But for that purpose, when children have been taught the Catechism, they must be sent to the minister or curate of the parish where they live, that he may examine and instruct them in it : examine whether they can say it, and instruct them so as to make them understand it. For though the words be all

as plain as they can be well made, yet the things signified by those words are many of them so high that it cannot be expected that children should reach and apprehend them without help: which therefore they must go to their minister for, whose duty and office it is to acquaint them with the full sense and meaning of every word, what is signified by it, and what ground they have to believe it is God's holy word. But to do this to any purpose, requires more time than is commonly allowed for it in our days: and that is one great reason there are so few among us that are *built up*, as they ought to be, *in their most holy faith*. Many refuse or neglect to send their children to be catechised at all; and they who send them, send them so little, and for so little a time, that it is morally impossible they should be much the better for it: as many have found by experience; who, although in their childhood they were taught the Catechism, and could say it readily, yet having not been sufficiently instructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and knew no more than as if they had never learnt it. I wish this be not the case of too many parents. Wherefore that this great work may be done effectually, so as to answer its end, as children should begin as soon as ever they are able to learn the Catechism, and go on by degrees till they can say it perfectly by heart; so when they can do that, they are still to continue to be instructed in it all along, till they understand it all so well, as to be fit to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which usually may be about sixteen or seventeen years of age, more or less, according to their several capacities. By this means, as they grow in years, they would *grow also in grace*, and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. This likewise would be a great encouragement to the minister to take pains with them, when they are such as can understand what he saith to them, and will continue under his care and conduct till they are settled and grounded in the faith, and have their senses exercised to discern between *good and evil*; and so shall be every way qualified to serve God, and do their duty to him *in that state of life, to which he shall be pleased afterwards to call them*, upon earth, and then to go to heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the kingdom, that all children that are born and bred up in it, were thus fully instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and of that religion which he hath revealed to the world, till they are fit for the holy communion, and ready to engage in the affairs of the world, the next generation would be much better than this, and Christianity would then begin to flourish again, and ap-

pear in its native beauty and lustre. And verily, whatsoever some may think, such especially as were never catechised themselves, this is as great and necessary a duty as any that is required in all the Bible. For God himself, by his apostle, expressly commands all parents to bring up their children in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*; that is, as I have showed, to catechise or instruct them in the principles of the doctrine of our Lord Christ. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a known law, yea, of many laws. There being many places in God's holy word, where the same thing is commanded in other terms by Almighty God himself, saying, *These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children*, Deut. vi. 7. And again, *Therefore shall ye lay up these words in our heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall teach them your children*, chap. xi. 18, 19. So also, chap. iv. 10. This is that which he commands also by the wise man, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 6. The word in the original which we translate, *train up*, signifies also to *dedicate* or *devote* a child to the services of God, by instructing him how to do it, and exercising him continually in it; and therefore in the margin of our Bibles it is translated, *catechise* a child: so that we have here both the necessity and usefulness of this duty: the necessity, in that it is commanded to *train up*, or *catechise*, a child in the ways of God; and the usefulness, in that what a child is thus taught, will remain with him all his life long.

Seeing therefore that God hath laid so strict a command upon all parents, to bring up their children in the knowledge of himself, and of their duty to him, they can expect no other, but that he should take particular notice whether they do it or not; and reward or punish them accordingly. As we see in Abraham, what a special kindness had God for him upon this account? *Shall I hide from him*, said the Lord, *that thing which I do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations upon earth shall be blessed in him*. But why had he such an extraordinary favour for Abraham above all other men? God himself gives us the reason of it, saying, *For I know that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. This was the reason that Abraham was so much in favour, that he was called the *friend of God*, James ii. 23.

And how much God is displeased with parents neglecting to

bring up their children in his true faith and fear, and suffering them to grow up and go on in a course of vice and profaneness, appears sufficiently from that severe judgment which he inflicted upon Eli and his whole house for it, saying to Samuel, *For I have told him, even Eli, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restraineth them not. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever,* 1 Sam. iii. 13, 14. The execution of which dreadful judgment is left upon record in the holy Scriptures, as a standing monument and caution to all parents, to take heed how they educate their children.

Be sure the saints of God in all ages have taken as much care to bring up their children well, as to live well themselves; making as much conscience of this, as of any duty whatsoever which they owe to God. That the children which he hath given them may answer his end in giving them; that they may not be insignificant ciphers in the world, or as *fruitless trees*, that serve only to *cumber the ground*, but that they may serve and glorify God whilst they are upon earth, so as to be *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*.

And verily all parents would make this their continual care and study, if they minded either their own or their children's good. Many complain, not without cause, that their children are disobedient, and undutiful to them; but the cause is chiefly in themselves. When they have neglected their duty to their children, how can they expect their children should perform their duty to them? They were never taught it, how then can they do it? If therefore they prove stubborn and obstinate, if they give themselves up to all manner of vice and wickedness; if instead of a comfort they be a grief and trouble to their parents; their parents must blame themselves for it; and when they come to reflect upon it, their sin in neglecting their duty to God and their children in their education, will be a greater trouble to them than any their children can give them. Whereas when parents bring up their children in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, if their children notwithstanding happen to miscarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their duty, and have nothing to answer for upon that account.

But what a mighty advantage would it be to the children themselves, to be thus continually put in mind of their baptismal vow, the articles of their faith, the duties of religion, and what else is contained in the Catechism, from their child-

hood all along till they come to be men or women! Their minds would be then filled with such divine truths, and with so great a sense of their duty, that there would be no room left for heresy or sin to enter, at least not so as to get possession, and exercise any dominion there. The first impressions that are made upon us are not soon worn out, but usually remain as long as we live. As the wise man observes, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 6. When one hath been all along from his childhood brought up in the knowledge of God and his holy will, it will stick by him so as to be a constant check upon him, to keep him within the compass of his duty in all ordinary cases; and if any thing extraordinary happen to draw him aside, it will make him restless and uneasy, till he hath recovered himself, and got into the right way again; and so it will either keep him innocent or make him penitent. In short, by the blessing of God attending, as it usually doth, this great duty, when it is conscientiously performed, is the best means that parents can use, whereby to breed up their children for heaven, to make them fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, both in this world, and for ever.

Wherefore, if we have any regard either to our own, or to our children's eternal welfare, let us set upon this duty in good earnest; let us bring up our children so long in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, till they fully know him, and all that he would have them believe and do, that they may be saved: but we must be sure to teach them by our example as well as instructions; we must not tell them one thing, and do another ourselves; but show them how to keep the faith and laws of God, by keeping them ourselves before their eyes, all the while we live together upon earth; that when we are all got, one after another, out of this troublesome and naughty world, we and our children may at last meet together in heaven, and there praise and glorify Almighty God, we for them, and they for us, and all for his grace and truth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

After this general instruction in the principles of our holy religion, it will be necessary, as soon as our young Christian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the nature of God, and the great mystery of the Trinity, into which we are all baptized; which therefore shall be my next subject.

THOUGHTS

UPON

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

THOUGH religion in general be a thing that all men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing, I think, that men differ so much about, as about the particular acts and exercise of it: for all nations in the world have some religion; but there is scarce two amongst them all that have the same; yea, in one and the same nation too, there are divers modes of religion professed and practised. No nation or country in the world but will afford us instances of this; and our own, I think, as many as any other whatsoever; for could we but cast our eyes into the several corners of this land, at this very moment, what variety might we observe in these acts which the several parties among us account to be religious! Some we should see sitting silently for a while together, without either speaking, or hearing of a word spoken; until at length up starts a man or a woman, or some such thing, and entertains them with a discourse made up of censures and malice, blasphemy and nonsense; and this is all the religion they pretend to. Others we should find crowded together in several corners, sometimes praying, sometimes discoursing, as it were, sometimes arguing the case with Almighty God, and acquainting him with what happens in the world, and that with as much confidence and malapertness, as if he was their fellow-creature; and then very gravely walk home, and please themselves with a vain conceit that they are more religious than their neighbours. Another sort of people there are amongst us, who are as superstitious as the former were slovenly and irreverent in their devotions: for these having been sprinkled with a little holy water, and having performed their obeisance to a crucifix or picture, presently fall a pattering over *Ave Maria's* and *Pater Nosters* to themselves, as fast as they can; whilst the priest, in the mean while, says something too, but the people generally know not what it is,

nor indeed what themselves say, it being all in an unknown tongue. But howsoever, though they know not what they say, they think that God doth, and therefore satisfy themselves that they have said something, though they know not what, and think that God is well pleased with what they have done, because themselves are so.

Others there are, and, by the blessing of God, far more than all the rest, in this nation, who present themselves before the great Creator and Possessor of the world, in that solemn and reverent manner as the constitutions of our church direct, humbly confessing their manifold sins against God, begging mercy and pardon from him, imploring his favour, and praising his name for all the expressions of his undeserved love to mankind: and all this in our vulgar tongue, that we all understand, and so perform a reasonable service unto God.

And, verily, if we consider the institution itself, of that religious worship which we thus perform, it is certainly the best that ever was prescribed by any church, as being most consonant to the general rules of devotion laid down in Scripture; as also most conformable to the discipline and practice of the primitive church. But we must not think that we serve God aright, because we be present with them that do so. I do not doubt but that there are many amongst us, who sincerely endeavour to worship God, whensoever they present themselves before him in public. I wish that all of us would do so. But we must still remember, that we should serve the Lord elsewhere as well as at church, and on all other days as well as upon the Lord's day: and that if we would be truly religious, our whole man must be devoted to the service of God, yea, and our whole time too. We must not think that it is enough to do something, but we must do all things that are required of us, which notwithstanding we can never do, unless we know both that God whom we ought to serve, and that service which we ought to perform unto him. And therefore David directs his son to the right and only way to true religion, saying, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. *And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind:* which words, did we apply them to ourselves, would, by the blessing of God, put us upon sincere endeavours after real and universal obedience to all the commands of God: and persuade us not to content ourselves with vain pretences to, and professions of, religion, as most do; but strive to live up unto our profession, and carry and behave ourselves so as becometh those who desire to be religious, and to serve God in good earnest. Which that we may do, let us

observe the rule and method which David here prescribes to his son : first to *know God* and then to *serve him* with a *perfect heart* and a *willing mind*.

I shall not trouble the reader with any critical division of the words, for they naturally divide themselves into two parts.

First, That we should *know*, and then that we should *serve God with a perfect heart, and a willing mind*.

I shall begin with the first, not only because it is first placed, but because it necessarily must precede the second ; it being impossible for us to serve God aright unless we know him : for without this, all our services will be but like the altar which the Athenians dedicated, *To the unknown God*. By which inscription, they manifested to the world, that they knew that they ought to serve some God, but that they knew not that God whom they ought to serve. But that we may so know him as to serve him aright, I shall first shew what it is of God which we must know, in order to our serving him aright.

First, therefore, he that would serve God aright, must *believe and know that he is*. Heb. xi. 6. that is, that there is such a supreme and all-glorious Being in and over the world that we call God, that made, preserves, governs, and disposes of every thing in the world, as seemeth best to him : and that it is not only probable that there is such a one, but that it is the most certain and necessary truth in the world ; without which, there would be no such thing as truth or certainty. For indeed if God was not, nothing could be ; he alone being the basis and foundation of all being in the world, yea, and of all motion too, Acts xvii. 28. And therefore *every thing that lives, every thing that moves, nay, every thing that is*, argues God to be ; which therefore is the first great truth, upon which all the rest depend ; without which nothing would be true, much less would our services be so : so that the first thing to be done in order to our serving God, is *to know and believe that he is*, and that he ought to be served and adored by us.

Secondly, It is necessary to know his essence too, as well as his existence ; what, as well as that he is ; what he is in himself, and what he is to us ; that in himself he *is what he is*, in and of himself, the source of all wisdom, the abyss of all power, the ocean of all goodness, the fountain of all happiness, the principle of all motion, and the centre, yea, perfection of all perfections in the world ; whose nature or essence is so pure, so glorious, so immense, so infinite, so eternal, so every way perfect, transcendent, and incomprehensible, that the more we think of him, the more we contemplate upon him, the more we praise and admire him, the more we may. And the highest

apprehensions that we can have of him is still to apprehend him infinitely higher than all our apprehensions of him. And therefore that man best knows God, that knows him to be beyond his knowledge ; and that knows he can never know him enough.

But we must know too what he is to us, even the Author and Giver of every good thing we have, and who in himself is whatsoever we can desire to make us happy ; and therefore it is that in the covenant of grace, when he would assure us that we shall have all things that we can enjoy, he only promises to be *our God*, Heb. viii. 10. which is as much as we can desire, and indeed as himself can promise ; for in promising himself, he hath promised whatsoever he is, whatsoever he hath, whatsoever he doth, nay, whatsoever he can do as God. And thus we are to look upon God as the only object of all true happiness, and the only centre wherein all the desires and inclinations of our souls can rest.

Thirdly, It is necessary also to know the several attributes and perfections which he hath revealed of himself in Scripture ; that he is so wise as to know whatsoever can be known ; so powerful as to do whatsoever can be done : so great and glorious in himself, that we have all just cause to fear him ; so kind and gracious in his Son, that it is our duty also to trust in him ; so true, that whatsoever he says is true, because he saith it ; so good, that whatsoever he doth is good, because he doth it ; so just, as to punish every sin that is committed, and yet so merciful, as to pardon every sinner that repenteth : that he is pure without mixture, infinite without bounds, eternal without beginning, everlasting without end, and every way perfect without comparison.

Fourthly, We must know also the works of God, what he hath done, wherein he hath manifested himself to us. But what hath God done ? or rather, what hath he not done ? It was he that raised this stately fabric of the world we live in, out of the womb of nothing. It was he that extracted light out of darkness, beauty and perfection out of a confused chaos. It was he that bedecked the glorious canopy of heaven with those glittering spangles the stars. It was he that commanded the sun to run his course by day, and the moon to ride her circuit by night about the world, to shew the inhabitants thereof the glory of their all-glorious Maker. It was he that hung the earth upon nothing, and spread upon the surface of it a curious carpet, embroidered with all manner, not of painted, but of real flowers, and plants, and trees. It was he that at first produced all things out of nothing ; and it is he that still

preserves all things in their being. It is he that orders the affairs of kingdoms, manageth the intrigues of state, directeth the events of wars, and disposes of every particular person as himself sees good. In a word, whatsoever was ever made in *heaven above*, or on *earth beneath*, it was he that made it; and whatsoever is still done in *heaven above*, or on *earth beneath*, it is he that doth it, so that nothing ever was, or is, or ever will be, or can be done, but what is done by him, as the first and universal cause of all things.

Fifthly, It is necessary also to know so as to believe, that though there is but *one God*, yet there are *three persons*; all and every one of which is that *one God*. I do not say it is necessary to understand or comprehend this mystery, for that we cannot do; but we are not therefore the less to believe it, because we cannot understand it: for there are many other things in divinity, yea, many things in natural philosophy, and in geometry itself, which we cannot understand, and yet for all that, both know and believe them to be true. But how much more cause have we to believe this, which God himself hath asserted of himself! Nay, and besides that, we have the same obligations to serve and honour every person, as we have to serve and honour any one person in the sacred Trinity; our Saviour himself having expressly told us, *That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. But that we cannot do, unless we believe the Son to be God as well as the Father; and, by consequence, unless we acknowledge this fundamental article of our Christian faith, into which we are all baptized.

Secondly, We must consider what kind of knowledge we ought to have of God, in reference unto our serving him aright.

For we must not think that it is enough to know in general that there is a God, and that he is wise and powerful, great and glorious, true and faithful, good and gracious; these things a man may know in general, so as to be able to discourse of them, and dispute for them too, and yet come short of that knowledge which is requisite to our true serving of God: which should be such a knowledge as will not only swim in the brain, but sink down into the heart; whereby a man is possessed with a due sense of those things he knows, so that he doth not only know, but in a manner feel them to be so. Thus David, who, in the text, calls upon his son to *know the God of his fathers*, intimates elsewhere, what knowledge he means; saying, *O taste and see that the Lord is good*, Psal. xxxiv. 8. Where we may observe, how he requires our spiritual senses to be employed in our knowledge of God, so as to see that he is

good, yea, and taste it too ; that is, feel and experience it in ourselves ; which though it may seem a paradox to many of us, yet there is none of us but may find it to be a real truth, and attain unto it, if we be but careful and constant in our meditations upon God, and sincere in performing our devotions to him : for, by these means, our notions of God will be refined, our conceptions cleared, and our affections, by consequence, so moved towards him, that we shall taste and experience, in ourselves, as well as know from others, that he is good, and that all perfections are centered in him.

But this practical and experimental knowledge of God, doth necessarily presuppose the other, or the general knowledge of him, so as to be acquainted with the several expressions which God in Scripture hath made use of, whereby to reveal himself and his perfections to us ; as when he is pleased to call himself the *Almighty God*, the *all-wise*, and *infinite*, the *just*, and *gracious God*, and the like ; or to say of himself, *I am that I am* ; that is, in and of myself eternal. Unless we first know that these and such like expressions belong to God, and what is the true meaning and purport of them, it is impossible for us to arrive at that knowledge of him, which is necessary to our serving him aright.

And so I come to the last thing to be considered here concerning the *knowledge of God*, even that it is necessary to our serving him ; so that none can serve him that does not first know him, and therefore that the method as well as matter of David's advice is here observable, *know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him* ; or, first *know* him, and then *serve* him *with a perfect heart, and a willing mind*.

And, verily, one would think that this is a truth so clear, so evident of itself, that it needs no proof or demonstration ; for how is it possible for us to know how to serve God, unless we first know that God whom we ought to serve ? For all our services unto God should be both proper to his nature, and suitable to his perfections ; and therefore unless I first know his nature and perfections, how can I adjust my services to them ? As for example, I am to *fear* his greatness, and *trust on his mercy*, and *rejoice* in his goodness, and *desire* his favour : but how can I do this, unless I know that he is thus great and merciful, good and favourable ?

Moreover, as a man cannot serve God when he hath a mind to do it, so neither will he have a mind or heart to serve him unless he first knows him. For the motions of the will are always regulated by the ultimate dictates of the practical understanding, so that a man chooses or refuses, loves or hates, de-

sires or abhors, according as he knows any object that is presented to him to be good or evil. And therefore how can I choose God as my chiefest good, unless I first know him to be so ; or love him as I ought above all things, unless I first know him to be better than all things ; or perform any true service to him, unless I first know him to be such a one, as deserves to have true service performed unto him ?

Nay, lastly, nothing that we do can be accepted as a service to God, unless it be both grounded upon, and directed by, a right *knowledge* of him. God would not accept of blind sacrifices under the Law ; much less will he accept of blind services now under the Gospel ; and therefore he expects and requires now, that whatsoever we do, either to or for him, be a *reasonable service*, Rom. xii. 1. That our souls as well as bodies, yea, and the rational as well as sensitive part, be employed in all the services which we perform to him ; which certainly cannot be, unless we first know him ; so that there is an indispensable connection betwixt our *knowing* and *servi*ng God ; it being as impossible for any man to serve him, that doth not first *know him*, as it is to *know him* aright, and not to serve him.

But however indispensable this connection be in its own nature, the Church of Rome can make a shift to dispense with it ; yea, so far as to assert, that ignorance is the mother of devotion. But you must excuse them, for they do not mean by devotion as we do, the real serving of God, but only the performing of some outward services to him. And such a kind of devotion, I confess, ignorance may be the mother of : but a man must be grossly ignorant that thinks this to be devotion, which is but a piece of pageantry, a mocking instead of serving God. And, for my part, I cannot but tremble to think what a dismal, what a dreadful account the heads of that church must hereafter give for daring to keep the people in so much ignorance as they do ; so as to render them incapable of serving God, that so they may be the more ready to serve the church ; that is, the interests and designs of the court of Rome.

But let them look to that ; whilst we, in the mean while, study to know God before all things else, considering,

First, God therefore made us that we might know him, and that we might know that he made us. And therefore it is that he hath made rational creatures capable of reflecting upon him that made us so : neither did he only make us at first, but he still preserves us ; we feed daily at his table, and live upon his bounty. And the very beasts, that any of us keep, know those

that keep them; and shall we be more brutish than brutes themselves, and not know him that keeps and maintains us? O how justly may God then call *heaven and earth to witness against us*, as he did once against his people Israel! Isa. i. 2, 3, 4.

Secondly, There is none of us but have attained to knowledge in other things: some of us have searched into arts and sciences, others are acquainted with several languages; none of us but are, or would be, expert in the affairs of this world, and understand the mysteries of our several trades and callings; what, and shall he alone, by whom we know other things, be himself unknown to us? What is, if this be not, a just cause, wherefore God should infatuate and deprive us of all our knowledge in other things? seeing we labour more to know them than him from whom we receive our knowledge.

Thirdly, Ignorance of God is itself one of the greatest sins that we can be guilty of, and which God is most angry for, Hos. iv. 4. And there God himself imputes the destruction of his people to the *want of knowledge*, ver. 6. Nay, and it is that sin too that makes way for all the rest. For what is the reason that many so frequently blaspheme God's name, slight his service, transgress his laws, and incense his wrath against them, but merely because they do not know him, how great, how glorious, how terrible a God he is? For did they but thus rightly know him, they could not but regard the thoughts of doing any thing that is offensive to him; and therefore the true *knowledge of God* would be the best security and the most sovereign antidote in the world against the infection of sin, and the prevalency of temptations over us; neither would it only preserve us from sin, but put us upon duty and service, and direct us also in the performance of it. Insomuch that the hardest duty will be easy to one that knows God; the easiest will be hard to one that knows him not. Hard, did I say? Yea, and impossible too; for although a man may know God, and yet not serve him, it is impossible that any man should serve God unless he knows him; knowledge itself being both the first duty that we owe to God, and the foundation of all the rest.

And therefore, to conclude, if any desire to perform the vow they made in their baptism, to *love and fear*, to *honour and obey* the *eternal God* that made them; if any desire to be *Christians indeed*, and *holy in all manner of conversation*; if any did desire to *trust on the promises*, and observe the *precepts* of the great Creator and Possessor of the world, to live above the *snare of death*, and to antedate the *joys of heaven*; if any desire to *live the life*, and to *die the death of the righteous*, to serve God here, so as to enjoy him hereafter; let all

such but study the Scriptures, and frequent the public ordinances; be constant and sincere in prayer and meditation, neglecting no opportunity of acquainting themselves with God, but make use of all means possible, to get their hearts possessed with a reverential apprehension of God's greatness and glory, and with a due sense of his goodness and perfections, and their work will soon be done; for if they thus know God, they will serve him too with a *perfect heart, and a willing mind*.

We have seen how we ought to know God; we are now to consider how we ought to serve him; without which, indeed, our knowledge of him will avail us nothing. For, as the apostle argues, *though I speak with tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal*, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. So here: though we should have the highest notions and speculations in divinity that men or angels ever had; though we should understand the highest mysteries in religion, and dive into the profoundest secrets of Christian philosophy; though we should excel the greatest Schoolmen, and the most learned doctors that ever lived; and were able to baffle heresies, dispute error and schism out of the Christian Church, and evince the truth of the Articles of our faith by more than mathematical demonstrations; yet if after all this our knowledge be only notional, not moving our affections, nor putting us upon the practice of what we know, *it is but as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal*; it may make a noise in the world, and get us applause amongst men, but it will stand us in no stead at all before the *eternal God*; yea, it will rise up in judgment against us another day, and sink us lower into the abyss of torments. And therefore, though men may, God doth not look upon this as the true knowledge of himself. Neither can any one be properly said to know God that doth not serve him with a *perfect heart, and a willing mind*. And therefore having discoursed of that knowledge which is necessary to our serving God, I shall now endeavour to show, how we ought to serve God according to our knowledge.

In speaking unto which, I must beg the reader's most serious and Christian attention, as to a matter which concerns our lives; yea, our eternal lives in another world: I hope there is none of those that pretends to instruct, so brutish and atheistical, as not to desire to serve God: none so proud and self-conceited, as to think they serve him well enough already, or at least know how to do it. I write only to such as desire to be instructed, read books of practical religion with no other design but to serve God, and to learn how to serve him better. And if this be our only design, as I hope it is, let us manifest

it to the world, and to our consciences, by attending to, and fixing what we read upon, our own hearts. For I may venture to say, that this is the noblest and most necessary subject that I can write, or any one can read of; and that which, if seriously weighed, rightly considered, and truly practised, will most certainly bring us to the highest happiness which our natures are capable of, or our persons were at first designed for.

Now, for our clearer proceeding in a matter of so great importance, we will first consider, what it is to serve God? A question very necessary to be treated of and resolved, because of the general mistakes that are in the world about it: many people fancying the service of God to consist in some few particular acts; as in saying their prayers, reading the Scriptures, going to church, and giving an alms now and then to the poor, especially if they be but zealous and resolute in the defence of the party or faction they are of, so as to promote it to the highest of their parts, estates, or power, then they think they do God good service, and that this is all he requires of them. Others think they serve God by serving of his creatures, as in praying to saints, bowing to images, and falling down before the eucharist, when it is carried in procession: nay, many there are, who think they serve God when they dishonour him, wresting his Scriptures, corrupting his doctrines, opposing his vicegerents, seducing his people and servants into error, and all for the promoting of some temporal interests, or groundless opinions. But we might know that the service of God is a thing of an higher nature, and nobler stamp than such silly mortals would persuade us it is: consisting in nothing less than,

1. In devoting of ourselves, and all we have, or are, or do, unto the honour of the eternal God; resigning our hearts wholly to him, and subduing all our passions and affections before him. For seeing we were wholly made by him, and wholly depend upon him, if we would serve God at all, we must serve him with all we are; every faculty of our souls, and member of our bodies, employing themselves in those services which he hath set them, so as to live as none of our own, but as wholly God's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preservation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath purchased us with his own most *precious blood*; and therefore being thus bought with a *price*, we should *glorify God both in our souls and bodies, which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

And as we are to serve him with all we are, so also with all we have. *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with*

the first-fruits of all thine increase, Prov. iii. 9. Whatsoever we have we receive from his bounty, and therefore whatsoever we have we should employ for his glory: our parts, our gifts, our estates, our power, our time; whatsoever we can call ours, is his in our hands, and therefore to be improved, not for ourselves, but him; as our Saviour shews in the parable of the talents which the master of the house distributed amongst his servants, *to some he gave one, to some five, to others ten*, that every one might employ his proportion to his *master's use*, neither *squandering it away*, nor yet *laying it up in a napkin*. It is God that is the grand master and possessor of the world, who parcels it out amongst his creatures, as himself sees good; but wheresoever he entrusteth any thing, he expects the improvement of it for himself. And so, I suppose, doth every one of us from such servants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their hands be laid out, not for themselves, but for us; and that they spend their time in our service, not their own: and if they do otherwise, none of us but will say, they do not serve us, but themselves. How then can we expect that God should look upon us as serving him, when we do not do so much for him as we expect from our own servants, though our fellow creatures? Or how can we think that we serve him as we ought, unless we serve him as much as we can? Or that God should look upon us as his servants, unless we employ and improve whatsoever we have, not for our own pleasure, profit, or applause, but for his honour and glory, from whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's words, Matt. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

2. Hence the serving of God consisteth also in the performing of sincere and universal obedience to all his laws and commands, which is but the natural consequence of the former: for if our whole man, both soul and body, and whatsoever we have, or are, ought to be devoted to his glory; it must needs follow, that whatsoever we do, should be conformable to his precepts; which also is no more than every one of us expects from our servants: for those whom we have covenanted with to be our servants, and whom we keep upon that very account, that they may serve us, we all expect that they should observe all our commands, and do whatsoever in justice, and by our covenants, we can enjoin them. But how much more then must we ourselves be obliged to obey all the laws and precepts of him that made us, whose creatures we are, and whose servants, by consequence, we ought to be.

I say, all his laws and precepts ; for we must not think to pick and choose, to do some things, and leave other things undone : for we should take it ill if our servants should serve us so ; if when we send them upon several businesses, they should mind only one of them, and neglect all the other, we should questionless look upon them as very idle and careless servants : but let us consider and bethink ourselves, whether we have not served our Master, the eternal God, as bad as our servants have or can serve us. He hath given us several laws to observe, and hath set us several works to do, and we, perhaps, can make a shift to do something that is required of us ; but never think of the other, and, perhaps, the principal things too that he expects from us.

Just as if when Moses had broke the two tables of stone, whereon the Ten Commandments were written, one man should have come and snatched away one piece, a second ran away with another piece, and a third with another, till at length ten several persons had gotten ten several pieces, wherein the Ten Commandments were severally written ; and when they had done so, every one of them should have striven to keep the law that was written in his own piece, never minding what was written in the others. Do you think that such persons as these are could be reputed the servants of God, and to observe his laws, when they minded only one particular branch or piece of them ? The case is our own ; we hearing of several laws and commands which the most high God hath set us, get some one of them by the end, and run away with that, as if we were not concerned in any of the rest. But let us still remember, that the same finger that wrote one of the commands, wrote all the other too. And therefore he that doth not observe all, as well as one, cannot properly be said to observe any at all. Neither indeed doth he serve God in any thing : for though he may do something that God requires, yet it is plain that he doth not therefore do it, because God requires it ; for it he did so, he would do all things else too that God requires. And therefore such a person doth not serve God at all in what he doth ; no, he serves himself rather than God, in that he doth it not in obedience to God, but with respect unto himself ; as to get himself a name and credit amongst men, or perhaps to satisfy his troublesome conscience, which would not let him be at quiet unless he did it.

But now one that would serve God indeed, hath *respect to all his commandments*, Psal. cxix. 6. *And walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, as Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have done, Luke i. 6. And thus,

art, that God will not be mocked: and though thou hast not seen, or perhaps so much as thought of him, he hath seen thee and thy thoughts too; yea, at this very moment looks upon thee. And what wilt thou answer him, the great Judge of the whole world, when he shall tell thee to thy face, and call his omniscience to witness, that he saw thee at this, as at other times, play the hypocrite with him, making as if thou servedst him, when thou servedst him not; and instead of serving him *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*, servedst him neither in *heart nor mind*. Let us all remember this when we approach God's house, and also bethink ourselves afterwards whether we have not been guilty of this sin! if we have, we may be sure God knows it, and we shall hear of it another day. But to prevent what justly may be our doom, let us repent of our former neglects in this kind; and, for the future, whensoever we are serving God, let us still look upon him as looking upon us, and fix in our hearts this one thing, *that God knows all things in the world*. And therefore let us not think to put God off with such careless and perfunctory services as heretofore too many of us have done; but if we desire to serve him at all, let us serve him *him with a perfect heart and a willing mind*.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew both what it is to serve God, and how we ought to do it: now let us not think it sufficient that we know how to serve God, unless we serve him according to our knowledge. Let us remember our Saviour's words; *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*, John xiii. 17. Which happiness, that all who read this may attain unto, let me advise them, *in the name of the eternal God that made them*, to renounce and forsake their former matters, sin, satan, and the world, whoever may have hitherto been enslaved to them, and now dedicate themselves wholly to the service of him, that made them for that very purpose, that they might serve him; yea, and who hath composed our natures so, that the highest happiness that we are capable of consists in our serving him: and therefore let us not think that he calls upon us to serve him, because he wants our service; no, be it known unto all, that he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his own perfections, and needs not the services of such poor silly mortals as we are, who have nothing but what we receive from him: and therefore he doth not call upon us to serve him, because he cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without him: not because he wants our service, but because we want it; it being impossible for us to be happy, unless we be holy, or to enjoy God, unless we serve him.

Wherefore all ye that desire to go to heaven, to have him

that made you reconciled unto you, and smile upon you, or that desire to be really and truly happy, set upon the work which God sent you into the world about ; put it not off any longer, make no more vain excuses, but from this day forward let the service of God be your daily, your continual employment and pleasure : study and contrive each day how to advance his glory and interest in the world, and how you may walk more strictly, more circumspectly, more conformably to his laws than ever. But whatsoever service you perform unto him, be sure to do it *with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind*. Think not to put him off with fancy instead of faith, or with outward performances instead of real duties : but remember that *he searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the sons of men*, and observes the inward motions of the soul, as well as the outward actions of the life : and therefore where-soever you are, whatsoever you do, still bethink yourselves, that he that made you, still looks upon you ; taking notice, not only of the matter of the actions which you do perform, but also of the manner of your performing them ; and therefore be sure to have a special care in all your services for or unto God, that your *hearts be sincere before him, and your minds inclined to him*, that so you may *serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind*.

But to conclude : Whoever ye are that read this discourse, I have here shewn you the *things that belong unto your everlasting peace*, having acquainted you with the method and manner of your *serving God* in time, in order to your enjoyment of him to eternity ; how you are affected with what you have read, and whether you be resolved to practise it, yea, or no, it is only the eternal God that knows. But this I know, that if you will not be persuaded to *serve God*, yea, and to serve him too *with a perfect heart, and a willing mind*, you will one day wish you had, but then it will be too late. And therefore if you will put it to the venture, go on still, and with the unprofitable servant, *hide your talents in a napkin*, or lavish them out in the revels of sin and vanity ; let thy *belly be still thy God*, and the *world thy Lord* ; serve thyself or satan, instead of the *living God* : but know, that *for all this God will bring thee into judgment* ; after which, expect nothing else but to be overwhelmed with horror and confusion to eternity.

Whereas on the other side, such amongst you as shall sincerely endeavour from henceforth to serve God *with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind*, I dare, I do assure them, in the name of God, *their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*.

for God suffers not his enemies to go unpunished, nor his servants unrewarded.

And therefore go on with joy and triumph in the service of so great and so good a Master, and devote yourselves wholly to his service, and employ *your talents* faithfully for his glory. Remember the time is but short; and Christ himself will receive you into eternal glory, saying, *Well done, good and faithful servants.*

THOUGHTS

UPON THE

MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY.

THOUGH there be many in the world that seem to be religious, there are but few that are so: one great reason whereof is, because there is so many mistakes about religion, that it is an hard matter to hit upon the true notion of it: and therefore desiring nothing in this world so much as to be an instrument in God's hand to direct men unto true religion, my great care must, and, by the blessing of God, shall be, to instil into them right conceptions of him, that is the only object of all religious acts, without which it is impossible to continue, or indeed to be, religious. The true nature and notion of religion consisting in the right carriage and deportment of our whole man, both soul and body, towards him that made us; whom therefore, unless we truly know, we can never be truly religious; and therefore they that begin their religion with zeal and passion, begin at the wrong end; for indeed they begin where they should end: our zeal for God, and love unto him, being the highest acts of religion, and therefore cannot be the first: but they necessarily presuppose the true knowledge of God, without which our zeal will be blind, and our love both groundless and transient.

But as it is impossible to be truly religious, unless we know God, so it is very difficult so to know him, as to become truly religious. It is true that there is such a supreme Being in and over the world, as we call God; the very light of nature teaches, and reason itself demonstrates it to be most certain and undeniable. But what he is, and what apprehensions we ought to have of this glorious Being, none but himself is able to describe and manifest unto us, so that our conceptions of him are still to be regulated by the discoveries that he hath made of himself to us; without which, though we may have some confused notions of him, yet we can never so know him, as to

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serve him faithfully, and, by consequence, be truly religious.

Hence therefore if we would know God, we must search the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, wherein God hath been pleased most clearly to manifest and discover himself unto us: I say, both the Old and New Testament; for otherwise, our knowledge of God may be very defective and erroneous, there being several things which God, in the New Testament, hath most plainly revealed of himself, which in the Old Testament are more darkly and obscurely delivered to us. As for example, the great *mystery of the Trinity*; though it be frequently intimated in the Old Testament, yet it is an hard matter rightly to understand it without the New: inso-much, that the Jews, though they have had the Law above three thousand, and the prophets above two thousand years among them, yet to this day they could never yet make this an article of faith; but they, as well as the Mahometans, still assert, *that God is only one in person as well as nature*: whereas nothing can be more plain from the New Testament, than that there *is but one God*, and yet *there are three persons*, every one of which is that *one God*: and so that though God be but one in nature, yet he is three in persons; and so three persons, as yet to be but one in nature.

And, verily, although there was no other text in all the Scripture whereon to ground this fundamental article of our Christian faith; that of Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, is a sufficient foundation for it; there being nothing, I think, necessary to be believed concerning the glorious Trinity, but what may easily and naturally be deduced from these words, which were spoken, it is true, by our Saviour before his ascension, but I question whether they were thoroughly understood, till after the Holy Ghost was come down to earth. It being only by God himself that we can come to the true knowledge of him, much less are we able rightly to apprehend, and firmly to believe, three persons in the Godhead, without the assistance of one of them that is, of the Holy Ghost; by whom the other two are wont to work; he being the issue, as I may so say, and breath of both. Hence it is, that the wisdom of the church, for these many centuries, hath thought fit to order, that this great mystery be celebrated the next Lord's day after the commemoration of the Holy Spirit's coming down upon the disciples, and in them, upon all true believers; both because all three persons have now manifested themselves to mankind; the Father in his creation of them, the Son in his conversing

with them, and the Holy Ghost by his coming down upon them : and also to show, that it is only by the grace and assistance of God's Spirit, that we can rightly believe in this glorious and incomprehensible mystery, which our Saviour hath so clearly revealed to us in these words, *go ye, and teach all nations, &c.*

For the opening of which, we must know that our Saviour in the foregoing verse acquaints his disciples, that now *all power* was given him *in heaven and in earth* ; by virtue whereof, he here issueth forth his commission to his apostles, and, in them, to all that should succeed them, to supply his room, and be his vicegerents upon earth, he being now to reside in his kingdom of heaven. *For*, saith he, *all power is given to me in heaven and earth ; go ye therefore and teach all nations* : as he also saith elsewhere to them, *As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you*, John xx. 21. as if he should have said, My Father having committed to me all power and authority both in heaven and earth, I therefore authorize and commissionate, yea, and command you to go teach all nations, &c.

This therefore is part of the commission which our Lord and Master left with his apostles immediately before he parted from them. Those being the last words which St. Matthew records him to have spoken upon earth ; and therefore they must needs contain matter of very great importance to his church ; and it must needs highly concern us all to understand the true meaning and purport of them. Which that we may the better do, in treating of them, I shall observe the same method and order as he did in speaking them.

First, therefore, here is the work he sends the apostles about ; *go ye therefore and teach*, Πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε, which more properly may be rendered, *go ye therefore and disciple all nations*, or, *make the persons of all nations to be my disciples*, that is, Christians. That this is the true meaning of the words, is plain and clear, from the right notion of the word here used, μαθητεύω, which coming from μαθητης, a *disciple*, it always signifieth either to be, or to make disciples, wheresoever it occurs in all the Scriptures ; as μαθητευθεῖς, Matt. xiii. 52. which is *instructed*, say we ; the Syriac better, *made a disciple*, a ܩܠܝܢܐ, that is, not only a scholar or learner, but a follower or professor of the Gospel, here called the *kingdom of heaven*. Another place where this word occurs is, Matt. xxvii. 57. ἐμαθητευσε τῷ Ἰησοῦ, where we rightly translate it, *was Jesus's disciple*. Another place is, Acts xiv. 21. καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἰκανοὺς, which we improperly render, *having taught many*, the Syriac and Arabic, more properly,

having made many disciples. And these are all the places in the New Testament where this word is used, except those I am now considering, where all the eastern languages render it according to its notation, *disciple*. The Persian paraphrastically expounds it, *go ye and reduce all nations to my faith and religion*. So that whosoever pleads for any other meaning of these words, do but betray their own ignorance in the original languages, and, by consequence, in the true interpretation of Scripture.

I should not have insisted so long upon this, but that the false exposition of these words hath occasioned that no less dangerous than numerous sect of anabaptists in the world; for the old Latin translation having it, *euntes ergo docete omnes gentes*; hence the German, where anabaptism first began, and all the modern translations render it as we do, *go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them*. From whence it was supposed by some that were not able to dive into the true meaning of the words, that our Saviour here commanded, that none should be baptized, but such as were first taught the principles of the Christian religion, which is the greatest mistake imaginable; for our Saviour doth not speak one word of teaching before baptism, but only after, ver. 20. *διδάσκοντες*, his meaning being only that his apostles should go about the world, and persuade all nations to forsake their former idolatries and superstitions, and to turn Christians, or the disciples of Jesus Christ; and such as were so should be baptized. And therefore infant-baptism is so far from being forbidden, that it is expressly commanded in these words; for all disciples are here commanded to be baptized; nay, they are therefore commanded to be baptized, because disciples. And seeing all disciples are to be baptized, so are infants too, the children of believing parents, for they are disciples as well as any other, or as well as their parents themselves: for all that are in covenant with God must needs be disciples: but that children were always esteemed in covenant with God, is plain, in that God himself commanded the covenant should be sealed to them, as it was all along by circumcision. But that children are disciples as well as others, our Saviour puts it out of all doubt, saying of children, *of such is the kingdom of God*, Mark x. 14. And therefore they must needs be disciples, unless such as are not disciples can belong to the kingdom of God, which a man must be strangely distempered in his brain before he can so much as fancy.

And besides, that children, so long as children, are looked upon as part of their parents; and therefore as their parents

are, so are they: if the parents be heathen, so are the children; if the parents be Jews, so are the children; if the parents be Christian, so are the children too: nay, if either of the parents be a Christian or disciple, the children of both are denominated from the better part, and so looked upon as Christians too, as is plain, 1 Cor. vii. 14. *But now are they holy*, that is, in a federal or covenant-sense they are in covenant with God; they are believers, Christians, or disciples, because one of their parents is so.

Now seeing children are disciples as well as others, and our Saviour here commands all disciples to be baptized, it necessarily follows, that children must be baptized too. So that the opinion which asserts, that children ought not to be baptized, is grounded upon a mere mistake, and upon gross ignorance of the true meaning of the Scripture, and especially of this place, which is most ridiculously mistaken for a prohibition, it being rather a command for infant-baptism.

But I must crave the reader's excuse for this digression from the matter principally intended, though I could not tell how to avoid it; nothing being more needful than to rescue the words of our blessed Saviour from those false glosses and horrible abuses which these last ages have put upon them, especially it coming so directly in my way as this did.

Secondly, Here is the extent of their commission, which is very large indeed, not being directed to some few particular persons, but to nations; nor to some particular nations only, but to all nations; *go ye therefore and disciple all nations*; or, all the world, as it is, Mark xvi. 15. This was that which the prophet Isaiah, or rather God by him, foretels, Isaiah xlix. 6. which our Saviour himself seems to have respect unto, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. The meaning whereof, in brief, is this; that though the Jews hitherto had been the only people of God, and none but they admitted into covenant with him, now the Gentiles also are to be brought in, and made confederates or copartners with them in the covenant of grace; that the partition-wall being now broke down, the Gospel is to be preached to all other nations, as well as the Jewish; Christ being now come to be *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as *the glory of his people Israel*.

But though the words of the commission be so clear to this purpose, yet the apostles themselves understood it not, till God had interpreted it from heaven to St. Peter, shewing him in a vision, that he should call no man *common or unclean*, Acts x. 28. From which time forward he, with the rest of the apostles, observed their commission exactly in preaching to the

Gentiles, as well as the Jews. And this was one end wherefore the Holy Ghost came down amongst them, even to enable them to do what their Master had commanded them. For he had here commanded them to preach unto all nations; but that they could not do, unless they could speak all languages, which therefore the Holy Ghost enabled them to do, Acts ii. 4, 5. which also is a clear demonstration of the true meaning and purport of these words: for there was no necessity that the Spirit should teach the apostles all languages, but that the Son had first enjoined them to preach unto all nations.

Thirdly, Hence is the manner whereby they are to admit *all nations* into the church of Christ, or into the Christian religion, by baptizing them *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. For the opening whereof we must know, that baptism was a rite in common use amongst the Jews before our Saviour's time, by which they were wont to admit proselytes into their religion, baptizing them *in the name of the Father*, or of God. A little before our Saviour's appearance in the world, John Baptist being sent to *prepare the way* for him, baptized the Jews themselves, *As many as came unto him, in the name of the Messiah to come*, which was called, the *baptism of repentance*. *I indeed baptize you*, says he, *with water to repentance; but he that comes after me is mightier than I*, &c. Matt. iii. 11. But when our Saviour was to go to heaven, he left orders with his apostles to make disciples; or, admit all nations into the religion which he had preached, confirmed with miracles, and sealed with his own blood, by baptizing them *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; which form of baptism, questionless, his apostles faithfully observed all along, as may be gathered also from Acts xix. 2, 3. where we may observe, how, when they said, they had *not so much as heard of an Holy Ghost*; he wondering at that, asked them, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* plainly intimating, that if they had been baptized aright, according to Christ's institution, they could not but have heard of the Holy Ghost, because they had been baptized in the *name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; but ver. 5. as also chap. ii. 38. and viii. 16. we read of *baptism administered in the name of the Lord Jesus*. From whence some have thought, that the apostles baptized only the Gentiles, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, but the Jews in the *name of the Lord Jesus* only; because they believing in the Father already, if they were baptized in the name of Jesus, and so testified their belief that he was the Messiah, they could not but believe in his Spirit too;

but this expression of baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus, seems to me rather to intimate that form of baptism which the Lord Jesus instituted : for doubtless the apostle observed the precepts of our Lord better than so, as to do it one way, when he had commanded it to be done another ; and baptized only in the name of Jesus, when he had enjoined them to baptize in the *name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*.

Neither did the church ever esteem that baptism valid, which was not administered exactly according to the institution, in the name of all the three persons : which the primitive Christians were so strict in the observance of, that it was enjoined, that all persons to be baptized should be plunged three times into the water, first at the *name of the Father*, and then at the *name of the Son*, and lastly, at the *name of the Holy Ghost* ; that so every person might be distinctly nominated, and so our Saviour's institution exactly observed, in the administration of this sacrament.

Hence also it was, that all persons to be baptized were always required, either with their own mouths, if adult, or if infants, by their sureties, to make a public confession of their faith in the three persons, into whose names they were to be baptized ; for this indeed was always looked upon as the sum and substance of the Christian religion, to *believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost* ; and they who believed in these three persons, were still reputed Christians ; and they who did not, were esteemed infidels or heretics.

Yea, and our Saviour himself hath sufficiently declared how necessary it is for us to believe this great mystery, as also how essential it is to a Christian, seeing that he requires no more in order to our initiation into his church, but only that we be baptized *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. In which words we may observe,

First, A Trinity of persons, into whose names we are baptized, the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. This is that mystery which is too high for human understandings to conceive, but not too great for a divine faith to believe, even that although there be but one God, there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, every one of which is that one and the self-same God ; and therefore it is that baptism is here commanded to be administered in the name of all three.

Now to confirm our faith in this great mystery, whereinto we were all baptized, I shall endeavour to shew, in few terms, what grounds we have in Scripture to believe it. For which

end we must know, that though this mystery hath received great light, by the rising of the Sun of righteousness upon the world, yet it did not lie altogether undiscovered before, *yea, from the very foundation of the world*, the church, in all ages, hath had sufficient ground whereupon to build their faith on this great and fundamental truth; for in the very creation of the world, he that created it is called אלה in the plural number: and in the creation of man, he said, *Let us make man in our own image*; from whence, though not a Trinity, yet a plurality of persons is plainly manifest; yea, in the beginning of the world too, we find both Father, Son, and Spirit, concurring in the making of it.

For, first, it is said, *that God created heaven and earth*, and then, *that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*, Gen. i. 2. There are two persons, God, and the Spirit of God. And then we read how God made the world by his word: *he said, Let there be light, and there was light*. From which expression, St. John himself concludes, *That all things were made by the Son of God, or his word*, John i. 3. and so does St. Paul, Col. i. 16.

Thus we read afterwards, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word by my tongue*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. where we have *Jehovah*, the *Spirit of Jehovah*, and the *word of Jehovah*, plainly and distinctly set down. As also in Psal. xxxiii. 6. and Isa. xlii. 1. where there is the Lord speaking of his Son, and saying, *that he will put his Spirit upon him*: and this also seems to be the reason, why the holy angels, when they praise God, say, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts*, Isa. vi. 3, Rev. iv. 8. saying *holy* thrice, in reference to the three persons they adore.

Thus we might discover this truth in the Old Testament, but in the New we can scarce look over it: for when Jesus was baptized, Matt. iii. 16. had we, who know nothing but by our senses, been present at this time with Jesus at Jordan, our very senses would have conveyed this truth to our understandings, whether we would or no. Here we should have heard a *voice from heaven*; whose was it, but *God the Father*? Here we should have seen one coming out of Jordan; who was that but *God the Son*? Here we should have seen something else too, in the form of a dove; who was that but *God the Spirit*? Thus was *God the Father* heard speaking; *God the Son* was seen ascending out of the water; and *God the Holy Ghost* descending from heaven upon him. The first was heard in the sound of a voice, the second was seen in the form of a man, and the third was beheld in the shape of a dove.

Voce Pater. Natus corpore, Flamen ave.

But there are many such places as this all the New Testament over, where the three persons of the Godhead are distinctly mentioned; as Luke i. 35. John xiv. 16, 26, xvi. 7. Gal. iv. 6. But the words of St. Paul are very remarkable too, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And yet *that all these three persons were but one God*, Gen. xviii. 2, 3. John x. 30. St. John expressly asserts, saying, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit; and these three are one*, 1 John v. 7. which certainly are as plain and perspicuous terms as it is possible to express so great a mystery in. But I need not have gone so far to have proved, that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead: the words I am treating of being a sufficient demonstration of it: for as all the three persons met together at our Saviour's baptism; so doth our Saviour here command, that all his disciples be baptized in the name of all three: and therefore I cannot but admire how any one should dare to profess himself to be a Christian, and yet deny or oppose the sacred Trinity, into which he was baptized when he was made a Christian: for, by this means, he, renouncing his baptism, blasphemes Christ, unchristians himself, blotting his own name out of the catalogue of those who were made Christians, only by being baptized, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*.

II. Here is the Godhead of the Trinity, or of every person in the Trinity, that one as well as the other is God: for here we see divine worship is to be performed to them all; and all that profess the true religion must be baptized in the name of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father; which certainly would be the greatest absurdity, yea, the most horrid impiety imaginable, were not they God as well as he. For if they be not God, they are creatures; if they be creatures, reason as well as Scripture forbids the same honour and worship to be conferred on them, which is given to God himself, and only due to him; which here, notwithstanding, we see is given to them, and that by our Lord himself, commanding baptism to be administered in his own name, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, as well as in the name of the Father; and so making himself and the Spirit equal sharers in the same honour that is given to the Father. So that was there no other place in the whole Scripture to prove it, this alone would be sufficient to convince any gainsayer, that the Son and Spirit are God as well as the Father, or rather the same God with him. But that I may unveil this mystery, and confirm this truth more clearly, we will consider each person distinctly,

and shew, that one as well as the other is really and truly God.

That the Father is God, none ever denied it, and therefore we need not prove it. But if the Father be God, the Son must needs be God too; for the same names, properties, works, and worship, which, in Scripture, are ascribed to the Father, are frequently ascribed to the Son also in Scripture: the Father is called Jehovah in Scripture, so is the Son, Hos. i. 7. Jer. xxiii. 6. The Father is called God, so is the Son, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God:* with God as to his person; God, as to his nature. So also, John xx. 28. Acts xx. 28, &c. Moreover, is the Father *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last? so is the Son, Rev. i. 8. Is the Father eternal? so is the Son, Isa. ix. 6. Rev. i. 8. Is the Father Almighty? so is the Son, Heb. i. 3. Is the Father every where? so is the Son, Matt. xviii. 20. Doth the Father know all things? so doth the Son, John xxi. 17. ii. 24. Did the Father make all things? so did the Son, John i. 3. Doth the Father preserve all things? so doth the Son, Heb. i. 3. Doth the Father forgive sins? so doth the Son, Matt. ix. 6. Is the Father to be worshipped? so is the Son, Heb. i. 6. Is the Father to be honoured? so is the Son, John v. 23. No wonder therefore that Christ, being thus in the *form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. He did not rob God of any glory by saying himself was equal to him. The greatest wonder is how any one can believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and yet deny this great truth, than which nothing can be more plain from Scripture: nothing being more frequently and more clearly asserted than this is. And, verily, it is well for us that it is so; for if Christ was not God, neither could he be our Saviour. None being able to free us from our sins, but only he against whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Christ's divinity, and yet expect pardon and salvation from him: all our hopes and expectations from him depending only upon his assumption of our human nature into a divine person.

And that the Holy Ghost also is God, is frequently asserted in the holy Scriptures, which himself indited. Indeed his very inditing of the Scriptures was a clear argument of his Deity, as well as the Scriptures indited by him. What man, what angel, what creature, who but God could compose such articles of faith, enjoin such divine precepts, foretel and fulfil such prophecies, as in Scripture are contained, who spake unto or by the prophets? Whom did they mean, when they said, *Thus*

saith the Lord of hosts? Who was this Lord of hosts that instructed them what to speak or write? Was it God the Father, or God the Son? No, but it was God the Holy Ghost: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21. Acts xxviii. 25. xxi. 11. The Holy Ghost therefore being the Lord of hosts, he must needs be God, there being no person that is or can be called the Lord of hosts, but he that is the very and eternal God.

This also may be gathered from 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*; for none can be the temple of God, but he in whom God dwells; for it is God's dwelling in a place that makes that place the temple of God; and yet we are here said to be the temple of God, because the Spirit dwelleth in us. And so elsewhere; *Know ye not, saith the Apostle, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you?* 1 Cor. vi. 19. which could not be unless the Holy Ghost was God.

Another express Scripture we have for it in Acts v. 3, 4. where St. Peter propounds this question to Ananias, *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?* and then tells him in the next verse, *Thou hast not lied to men, but to God*: and so expressly asserts the Holy Ghost to be God.

Moreover, that the Holy Ghost is truly God, coequal to the Father and Son, is plain, in that the Scriptures assert him to be, to have, and to do whatsoever the Father or Son is, hath, or doth, as God. For, is the Father and Son eternal? so is the Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. Is God the Father and the Son every where? so is the Spirit, Psal. cxxxix. 7. Is God the Father and the Son a wise, understanding, powerful, and knowing God? so is the Spirit, Isaiah xi. 2. Are we baptized in the name of the Father and the Son? so are we baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost. May we sin against the Father and the Son? so may we sin too against the Holy Ghost. Nay, the sin against this person only is accounted by our Saviour to be a sin never to be pardoned, Matt. xii. 31, 32. We may sin against God the Father, and our sin may be pardoned: we may sin against God the Son, and our sin may be pardoned: but if we sin or speak against the Holy Ghost, that shall *never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor yet in that which is to come*. But if the Holy Ghost be not God, how can we sin against him? or how comes our sin against him only to be unpardonable, unless he be God? I know it is not therefore unpardonable because he is God, for then the sins against the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, seeing they

both are God as well as he : yet, though this sin is not therefore unpardonable, because he is God, yet it could not be unpardonable unless he was God. For, supposing him not to be God, but a creature, and yet the sin against him to be unpardonable, then the sin against a creature would be unpardonable, when sins against God himself are pardoned ; which to say, would, itself, I think, come near to the sin against the Holy Ghost. But seeing our Saviour describes this unpardonable sin, by blaspheming or speaking against the Holy Ghost, let them have a care that they be not found guilty of it, who dare deny the holy Ghost to be really and truly God, and so blaspheme and speak the worst that they can against him.

III. We have seen what ground we have to believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that every one of these persons is God ; we are now to consider the order of those persons in the Trinity, described in the words before us.

First, the Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost ; every one of which is really and truly God ; and yet they are all but one real and true God. A mystery which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have a great care how we speak of it ; it being both easy and dangerous to mistake in expressing so mysterious a truth as this is. If we think of it, how hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically divine nature, in more than one and the same divine person ? or, upon three divine persons in no more than one and the same divine nature ? If we speak of it, how hard is it to find out fit words to express it ? If I say, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true : but if I say, they be three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say, the divine persons are distinct in the divine nature : but I cannot say, that the divine nature is divided into the divine persons. I may say, God the Father is one God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is one God : but I cannot say, that the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say, the Father begat another who is God ; yet I cannot say, that he begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceeded another who is God ; yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For, all this while, though their nature be the same, their persons are distinct ; and though their persons be distinct, still their nature is the same. So that though the Father be the first person in the Godhead, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost the third ; yet the Father is not the first, the Son a second, the Holy Ghost a third God. So hard a thing is it to word so great a mystery aright ; or to fit so high a truth with

expressions suitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it. And therefore I shall not use many words about it, lest some should slip from me unbecoming of it: but, in as few terms as I can, I will endeavour to shew, upon what account the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third person in the Trinity.

First, therefore, the Father is placed first, and really is the first person, not as if he was before the other two, for they are all coeternal; but because the other two received their essence from him: for the Son was begotten of the Father; and and the Holy Ghost proceeded both from the Father and Son; and therefore the Father is termed by the primitive Christians, *the root and the fountain of Deity*. As in waters there is the fountain or well head; then there is the spring that boils up out of that fountain; and then there is the stream that flows both from the fountain and the spring; and yet all these are but one and the same water: so here, God the Father is the fountain of Deity; the Son, as the spring that boils up out of the fountain; and the Holy Ghost, that flows from both; and yet all three is but one and the same God. The same may be also explained by another familiar instance: the sun, you know, begets beams, and from the sun and beams together proceed both light and heat: so God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace. But as the sun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all are together: so neither is the Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another; in which only respect, the Father is the first person in the Trinity.

Secondly, The Son is the second person, who is called the Son, yea, and the only-begotten Son of God, because he was begotten of the Father, not as others are by spiritual regeneration, but by eternal generation, as none but himself is. For the opening whereof we must know, that God that made all things fruitful, is not himself sterile or barren; but he that hath given power to animals, to generate and produce others in their own nature, is himself much more able to produce one, not only like himself, but of the self-same nature with himself, as he did in begetting his Son by communicating his own unbegotten essence and nature to him. For the person of the Son was most certainly begotten of the Father, otherwise he would not be his Son; but his essence was unbegotten, otherwise he would not be God. And therefore the highest apprehensions that we can frame of this great mystery, the eternal generation

of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the person of the Father to have communicated his divine essence to the person of the Son: and so of himself begetting his other self the Son, by communicating his own eternal and unbegotten essence to him. I say, by communicating of his essence, not of his person to him, for then they would be both the same person, as now they are of the same essence: the essence of the Father did not beget the Son by communicating his person to him, but the person of the Father begat the Son by communicating his essence to him; so that the person of the Son is begotten, not communicated; but the essence of the Son is communicated, not begotten.

This notion of the Father's begetting the Son by communicating his essence to him, I ground upon the Son's own words, who certainly best knew how himself was begotten; *for as the Father, saith he, hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*, John v. 26. 'To have life in himself, is an essential property of the divine nature; and therefore wheresoever that is given or communicated, the nature itself must needs be given and communicated too.

Now here we see how God the Father communicated this his essential property, and so his essence to the Son; and, by consequence, though he be a distinct person from him, yet he hath the same unbegotten essence with him: and therefore, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath the Son life in himself; and so all other essential properties of the divine nature, only with this personal distinction, that the Father hath this life in himself, not from the Son, but from himself; whereas the Son hath it, not from himself, but from the Father: or, the Father is God of himself, not of the Son; the Son is the same God, but from the Father, not from himself; and, therefore, not the Father, but the Son, is rightly called by the Council of Nice, *God of God, Light of Light, yea, very God of very God*.

Thirdly, Having thus spoken of the two first persons in the sacred Trinity, we now come to the last, the Holy Ghost. The last, I say, not in nature or time, but only in order: for, as to their nature, one is not better or more God than another; neither, as to time, is one before another; none of them being measured by time, but all and every one of them eternity itself. But though not in nature or time, yet in order, one must needs be before another: for the Father is of himself, receiving his essence neither from the Son, nor from the Spirit, and therefore is, in order, before both; the Son received his essence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore, in

order, is before the Spirit, as well as after the Father ; but the Spirit receiving his essence both from the Father and the Son, must needs, in order, be after both.

I confess, the Spirit is no where in Scripture said to proceed from the Son, and therefore the inserting this into the Nicene Creed was the occasion of that schism betwixt the Western and Eastern churches, which hath now continued for many ages ; in which, I think, both parties are blame-worthy ; the Western churches for inserting this clause following into the Nicene Creed, without the consent of a general council ; and the Eastern for denying so plain a truth as this is : for though the Spirit be not said to proceed from the Son, yet he is called *the Spirit of the Son*, Gal. iv. 6. Rom, viii. 9. which, questionless, he would never have been, did not he proceed from the Son, as well as from the Father. And, verily, the Father communicating his own individual essence, and so whatsoever he is, (his paternal relation excepted,) to the Son, could not but communicate this to him also, even to have the Spirit proceeding from him, as it doth for himself. So that as whatsoever the Father hath originally in himself, that hath the Son by communication from the Father : so hath the Son this, the Spirit's proceeding from him by communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in himself : and the Spirit thus proceeding both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that he is placed after both, not only in the words before us, but also in 1 John v. 7. and so elsewhere.

From what I have hitherto discoursed concerning this great mystery, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, I shall gather some few inferences, and so conclude.

1. Is the Son God, yea, the same God with the Father ? Hence, I observe, what a strange mystery the work of man's redemption is, that God himself should become man. And he that was begotten of his Father, without a mother, from eternity, should be born of his mother, without a father, in time ; that he who was perfect God, like unto the Father, in every thing, his personal properties only excepted, should also be perfect man, like unto us in all things, our personal infirmities only excepted ; that he that made the world, should be himself made in it ; that eternity should stoop to time, glory be wrapt in misery, and the Sun of righteousness hid under a clod of earth ; that innocence should be betrayed, justice condemned, and life itself should die, and all to redeem man from death to life. O wonder of wonders ! how justly may we say with the Apostle, *without controversy great is the mystery of godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

2. Is the Spirit also God? Hence I observe, that it is God alone that can make us holy; for seeing the Scripture all along ascribes our sanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is himself really and truly God, it necessarily followeth, that the special concurrence and influence of Almighty God himself is necessary to the making us really and truly holy.

3. Are all three persons in the Trinity one and the same God? Hence I infer, they are to have one and the same honour conferred upon them, and one and the same worship performed unto them. Or, as your Saviour himself saith, *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. and *ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1. and *as we pray to the Father, so should we pray to the Son* too, as the Apostles did, Luke xvii. 5. and St. Stephen, Acts vii. 59. and St. Paul to all three, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

4. Is baptism to be administered *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*? Hence I observe, how necessary it is to believe in these three persons, in order to our being real and true Christians: for we being made Christians in the name of all three, that man ceaseth to be a Christian that believes only in one: for faith in *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*, is necessary to the very constitution of a Christian; and is the principal, if not the only characteristic note whereby to distinguish a Christian from another man; yea, from a Turk: for this is the chief thing that the Turks, both in their Alcoran and other writings, upbraid Christians for, even because they believe a Trinity of persons in the Divine nature. For which cause they frequently say they are people that believe God hath companions; so that take away this article of our Christian faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but a little difference betwixt a Christian and a Turk: but by this means, Turks would not turn Christians, but Christians Turks, if this fundamental article of the Christian religion was once removed: for he that doth not believe this, is no Christian upon that very account, because he doth not believe this by which a Christian is made: and whatsoever else errors a man may hold, yet if he believes in *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*, I cannot, I dare not but acknowledge him to be a Christian in general, because he holds fast to the foundation of the Christian religion, though perhaps he may build upon it hay and stubble, and so his superstructure be infirm and rotten.

I shall conclude with a word of advice to all such as call themselves by the name of Christ: I suppose and believe they

are all Christians, from their taking that name ; and therefore I need not use any arguments to persuade them to turn Christians, for so they are already by profession : but, seeing that they are Christians, let me desire them to consider how they came to be so ; even by being baptized *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. And if they desire to be Christians still, I must advise them to continue stedfast in that faith whereby they were made so. Of all the errors and heresies which Satan hath sowed amongst us, let us have an especial care to avoid such as strike at the very foundation of our religion ; I mean, the Arians, Macedonians, Socinians, and all manner of Antitrinitarians, such as deny the most sacred Trinity.

But I hope we have better learned Christ, than to hearken to such opinions as these are ; and therefore my next advice in brief is only this, that as we excel others in the truth of our profession, so we would excel them also in the holiness of our life and conversation : let us manifest ourselves to be Christians indeed, by believing the assertions, trusting on the promises, fearing the threatenings, and obeying the precepts of Christ our Master ; that both infidels and heretics may be convinced of their errors, by seeing us outstripping them in our piety towards God, equity to our neighbours, charity to the poor, unity amongst ourselves, and love to all : for this would be a clear demonstration, that our faith is better than theirs is, when our lives are holier than theirs are ; and for our encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, that if we believe thus, as Christ hath taught us, and live as he hath commanded us, we shall also obtain what he hath promised, even *eternal happiness in the world to come* ; where we shall see, enjoy, and praise that God, into whose name we are baptized, even *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* for evermore. There, with angels and archangels, with the heavens and all the powers therein ; with cherubin and seraphin, and all the blessed inhabitants of those everlasting mansions ; with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all the company of heaven, and the holy church throughout all the world, we shall eternally laud and magnify thy sacred name : “ O God the Father of heaven ; O God, the Son, Redeemer of the world ; O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son ; O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, evermore praising thee, the Father of an infinite majesty ; together with thine honourable, true, and only Son ; thee the King of glory, O Christ ; and thee, O Holy Ghost, the Comforter :”

still joining with the heavenly choir, and saying, "Holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory; glory be to thee, O Lord, most high. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, and sittest at the right-hand of God the Father, O blessed, glorious, and eternal Spirit; for thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father; for thine, O Lord, is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

And now having led the Christian through this first stage of his course, and instructed him in the principles of his religion, and in the great mystery of the Trinity, into which he was baptized, it may be fit to bring him into the world, and shew him how he ought to demean himself in regard to the things of it.

THOUGHTS

UPON

WORLDLY RICHES.

SECT. I.

HE that seriously considers the constitution of the Christian religion, observing the excellency of its doctrines, the clearness of its precepts, the severity of its threatenings, together with the faithfulness of its promises, and the certainty of its principles to trust to ; such a one may justly be astonished, and admire what should be the reason that they who profess this not only the most excellent, but only true religion in the world, should notwithstanding be generally as wicked, debauched, and profane, as they that never heard of it. For that they are so, is but too plain and obvious to every one that observes their actions, and compares them with the practices of Jews, Turks, and Infidels. For what sin have they amongst them which we have not as rife amongst ourselves ? Are they intemperate and luxurious ? Are they envious and malicious against one another ? Are they uncharitable and censorious ? Are they given to extortion, rapine, and oppression ? So are most of those who are called Christians. Do they blaspheme the name of God, profane his sabbaths, contemn his word, despise his ordinances, and trample upon the blood of his only Son ? How many have we amongst ourselves that do these things as much as they ?

But how comes this about, that they who are baptized into the name of Christ, and profess the religion which he established in the world, should be no better than other people, and in some respects far worse ? It is because though they profess the Gospel, yet they do not understand it ? nor know what sins are forbidden, nor what duties are enjoined in it ? That none can plead, especially amongst us who have the

Gospel so clearly revealed, so fully interpreted, so constantly preached to us, as we have. Insomuch that if there be any one person amongst us that understands not what is necessary to be known, in order to our everlasting happiness, it is because we will not; wilfully shutting our eyes against the light.

But what then shall we impute this wonder to, that Christians are generally as bad as heathens? Does Christ in his Gospel dispense with their impieties, and give them indulgences for their sins, and license to break the moral law? It is true, his pretended Vicar at Rome doth so; but far be it from us to father our sins upon him, who came into the world on purpose to save us from them. Indeed if we repent and turn from sin, he hath both purchased and promised pardon and forgiveness to us, but not till then: but hath expressly told us the contrary, assuring us, that *except we repent we must all perish*, Luke xiii. 3. I confess there have been such blasphemous heretics amongst us, called Antinomians, who are altogether for faith without good works, making as if Christ by erecting his Gospel, destroyed the moral law; but none can entertain such an horrible opinion as that is, whose sinful practices have not so far depraved their principles, that they believe it is so only because they would have it to be so, directly contrary to our Saviour's own words, Matt. v. 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* But I hope there is none of us but have better learned Christ than to think that he came to patronize our sins, who was *sent to bless us, by turning away every one of us from our iniquities*, Acts iii. 26. But how come Christians then to be as bad and sinful as other men? Is it because they are as destitute as other men of all means whereby to become better? No, this cannot possibly be the reason: for nothing can be more certain, than that we all have, or at least may, if we will, have whatsoever can any ways conduce to the making us either holy here, or happy hereafter. We have the way that leads thereto revealed to us in the word of God; we have that word frequently expounded and applied to us; we have all free access not only to the ordinances which God hath appointed for our conversion, but even to the very Sacraments themselves, whereby our faith may be confirmed, and our souls nourished to eternal life. And more than all this too, we have many gracious and faithful promises, that if we do but what we can, God for Christ's sake will afford us such assistances of his grace and Spirit, whereby we shall be enabled to perform universal obedience to the moral law, such as God for Christ's sake will accept of, instead of that perfection which the law

requires. So that now, if we be not all as real and true saints, as good and pious Christians as ever lived, it is certainly our own faults : for we have all things necessary to the making of us such, and if we were not wanting to ourselves, it is impossible we should fail of having all our sins subdued under us, and all true grace and virtue implanted in us. Insomuch that since the Christian religion was first revealed to the world, there have been certainly millions of souls converted by it, who now are glorified saints in heaven, which once were as sinful creatures upon earth as we now are. But it seems they found the Gospel an effectual means of conversion and salvation ; and therefore it cannot be imputed to any defect in the Gospel, or the Christian religion, that we are not all as good men as ever lived, and by consequence better than the professors of all other religions in the world.

But what then shall we say to this wonder of wonders, that Christians themselves in our age live such loose and dissolute lives as generally they do ? What should be the reason that all manner of sin and evil should be both practised and indulged amongst us, as much as in the darkest corners of the world, upon which the Gospel never yet shined ? Why, when we have searched into all the reasons that possibly can be imagined, next to the degeneracy and corruption of our nature, this must needs be acknowledged as one of the chief and principal, that men living upon earth, and conversing ordinarily with nothing but sensible and material objects, they are so much taken up with them, that those divine and spiritual truths, which are revealed in the Gospel, make little or no impression at all upon them ; though they hear what the Gospel saith and teacheth, yet they are no more affected with it, nor concerned about it, than as if they had never heard of it, their affections being all bent and inclined only to the things of this world. And therefore it is no wonder, that they run with so full a career into sin and wickedness, notwithstanding their profession of the Gospel, seeing their natural propensity and inclination to the things of this world are so strong and prevalent within them, that they will not suffer them to think seriously upon, much less to concern themselves about, any thing else.

The apostle, in his Epistle to Timothy, chap. vi. endeavouring to persuade men from the over-eager desire of earthly enjoyments, presses this consideration upon us, that such an inordinate desire of the things of this world betrays men into many and great temptations, ver. 8, and 9. And then he gives this as the reason of it, ver. 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil* ; that is, in brief, the love of riches and temporal

enjoyments is the great reason why men are guilty of such great and atrocious crimes as generally they are ; there being no evil but what springs from this, as from its root and origin ; which is so plain a truth, so constantly and universally experienced in all ages, that the heathens themselves, the ancient poets and philosophers, could not but take notice of it. For Bion the philosopher was wont to say, that *the love of money was the metropolis of wickedness*. And Apollodorus, *When thou speakest of the love of money, thou mentionest the head of all evils, for they are all contained in that*. To the same purpose is that of the poet Phocylides, *The love of riches is the mother of all wickedness*. What these saw by the light of nature, hath here divine authority stamped upon it ; God himself asserting the same thing by this apostle, *The love of money is the root of all evil* ; which, that we may the better understand, we must consider,

1. What is here meant by money.
2. What by the love of riches.
3. How the love of money is the root of all evils.

As for the first, I need not insist long upon it, all men knowing well enough what money is. But we must remember, that by money is here understood not only silver and gold, but all earthly comforts, possessions and enjoyments whatsoever, whether goods, lands, houses, wares, wealth, or riches of any sort or kind whatsoever.

2. By the love of money, we are to understand that sin which the Scriptures call covetousness, and the true nature and notion of it consisteth especially in three things.

1. In having a real esteem and value for wealth or money, as if it was a thing that could make men happy, or better than otherwise they would be ; as it is plain all covetous men have their desire of riches proceeding only from a groundless fancy, that their happiness consists in having much, which makes them set a greater value upon riches, preferring them before other things, even before God himself. Hence the love of money is altogether inconsistent with the love of God, 1 John ii. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. It being impossible to love God as we ought, above all things, and yet to love the world too at the same time.

2. Hence the love of money supposeth also a delight and complacency in the having of it, proceeding from the aforesaid esteem they have for it ; for being possessed with a fond opinion, that the more they have the better they are, they cannot but be pleased with the thoughts of their present enjoyments, as the rich man was in the Gospel, Luke xii. 16, 17, 18, 19.

who, because his ground brought forth plentifully, resolved to enlarge his barns, and lay up stores for many years, and bid his soul take her ease. How many such fools have we amongst us, who please and pride themselves with the thoughts of their being rich ?

3. From this esteem for, and complacency in, money or wealth, it follows that men are still desirous of having more, placing their happiness only in riches ; because they think they can never be happy enough, therefore they think too they are never rich enough. Hence how much soever they have, they still desire more, and therefore covetousness in Scripture is ordinarily expressed by *πλεονεξία*, which properly signifies an inordinate desire of having more, which kind of desires can never be satisfied, because they are able to desire more than all the world, and to raise themselves as high and as far as the infinite good itself. Now such a love of money as this is, consisting in having a real esteem for it, in taking pleasure and delight in it, and in longing and thirsting after it, this is that which the Apostle here saith *is the root of all evil* ; that is, it is the great and principal cause of all sorts of evil that men are guilty of, or obnoxious to ; which, that I may clearly demonstrate to you, we must first know in general that there are but two sorts of evil in the world, the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment or misery ; and the love of money is the cause of them both.

To begin with the evil of sin, which is the only fountain from whence all other evils flow, and itself doth certainly spring from the love of money, as much or more than from any thing else in the whole world. Insomuch that the greatest part of those sins which any of us are guilty of, proceed from this master sin, even the love of money, as might easily be shown from a particular enumeration of those sins which men generally are addicted to. But that I may proceed more clearly and methodically in demonstrating this, so as to convince men of the danger of this above most other sins, I desire it may be considered that there are two sorts of sins that we are all guilty of, sins of omission and sins of commission, under which two heads all sins whatsoever are comprehended.

First, for sins of omissions. It is plain that our love of money is the chief and principal cause that makes us neglect and omit our duties to God and man, as it is manifest we most of us do. In speaking unto which I must take leave to deal plainly, for it is a matter that concerns our eternal salvation ; and therefore howsoever some may resent it, I am bound in duty and conscience to mind men of their sins, and particu-

larly of this great prevailing sin of covetousness, or inordinate love of money, which most men give but too much reason to fear they are guilty of, and therefore I may tell them of it without any breach of charity. It is true I cannot pretend to be a searcher of hearts; that is only God's prerogative, and therefore I shall not take upon me to judge or censure any particular persons; but I shall speak to all in general, and leave every one to make the particular application of it to himself. Neither shall I speak of things at random, but I shall instance only in such sins which I can assert upon my own knowledge, that most men allow themselves, and that upon this account only, because they love money.

For first, what is the reason that so few, indeed scarce any of us, are at prayers at church upon the week-day, to perform our devotion to him that made us? Is it because we think it impertinent to pray unto him? No; our presence there on Sundays contradicts that, and I have more charity than to think that any are so atheistical as to imagine it to be superfluous to pay our homage to the supreme Governor of the world, and to implore his aid and blessing upon us? But what then should be the reason of it? in plain terms, it is nothing else but because men love money, and therefore are loth to spare so much time from their shops or callings, as to go to church to pray to God for what they want, and praise his name for what they have. Let us search into our own hearts, and we shall acknowledge this to be the only reason of it. But it is a very foolish one; for who can bless us but God?

2. What is the reason that so many neglect the sacrament of the Lord's supper? Do not we all look upon it as our duty to receive it? I dare say we do; Christ himself having commanded it, Luke xxii. 19. and it being the only way whereby to manifest ourselves to be Christians, what then can be the reason of this neglect of it, but merely the love of money, which makes men loth to spend time in preparing and fitting themselves for it.

But seeing men thus excommunicate themselves by not coming to the communion, in plain terms, they deserve to be excommunicated by the censures of the church. And if God should in his providence deprive them of ever having an opportunity of receiving the sacrament again, they must even thank themselves for it. Howsoever this shall be their present punishment, that they shall be deprived of it, until they think it worth their while to come unto it.

3. What is the reason that the Sabbath is so profaned? That so many take their recreations upon the Lord's-day, but be-

cause they cannot spare time for it from getting money upon other days? thinking the day long, because they can get little in it; as Amos viii. 5. And why do so many profane the Sabbath, while at church, by thinking upon the world, but because they love it? Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

4. What is the reason that charity is so cold, but that the love of money is grown so hot amongst us? For do not we all know it is our duty to relieve the poor? Hath not God expressly commanded it? Hath not he threatened a curse to them that do it not, and promised a blessing to them that do it? What then can be the reason that so many neglect it, but because they love their money more than God?

To these might be added many other sins, which the love of money daily occasions. For what is the reason that many read the Scriptures so seldom and so cursorily as they do? What is the reason that they either have none, or commonly neglect their family duties? that every slight occasion will make them omit their private devotions; that they can find no time to look into their own hearts, to consider their condition, and meditate upon God and Christ, and the world to come? What is the reason that many know their shops better than their hearts, and are acquainted with the temper of their body more than with the constitution of their souls? That they are so careful and industrious in the prosecution of their worldly designs, so negligent and remiss in looking after heaven? What is or can be the reason of these things, but that inordinate love and affection they have for money, or the things of this world, which makes them so eager in the pursuit of them, that they forget they have any thing else to mind, and so much taken up with worldly business, that God, and Christ, and heaven, and soul, and all, must give way to it? O the folly and madness of sinful men! what a strange corrupt and degenerate thing is the heart of man become! that we should be so foolish and unwise as to prefer our bodies before our souls, earth before heaven, toys and trifles before the eternal God, the worst of evils before the best of goods, even sin itself, with all the miseries that attend it, before holiness and that eternal happiness which is promised to it! and all for nothing else but the love of a little pelf and trash, which hath no other worth but what our own distracted fancies put upon it.

And if the love of money be the root of so many sins of omission, how many sins of commission must need sprout from it? Indeed they are so many that it would be an endless thing to reckon them all up, and therefore I shall not undertake it, but shall mention only such of them as every one upon the

first reading shall acknowledge to be the cursed offspring of this one fruitful and big-bellied sin of covetousness, or the love of money, of which Cicero observes, that *Nullum est officium tam sanctum atque solenne, quod non avaritia comminueri atque violare soleat*. So we may say on the other side too, that there is no sin so great and horrid, but covetousness will sometimes put men upon it.

Is idolatry a sin? yea, certainly, one of the greatest that any man can be guilty of, and yet nothing can be more plain, than that covetousness, wheresoever it comes, draws it along with it; insomuch, that every covetous man is asserted by God himself to be an idolater, Eph. v. 5. and covetousness to be idolatry itself, Col. iii. 5. And the reason is plain; for what is idolatry, but to give that worship to a creature which is due only unto God? But what higher acts of worship can we perform to God, than to love him and to trust on him, which it is certain every covetous man gives to his money; and therefore covetousness is here called, *the love of money*. And we cannot but be all sensible what trust and confidence men are wont to repose in their estates and incomes. But such will say, we do not fall down before our money, nor pray unto it; but they trust on it, and that is infinitely more than bare praying to it: and though they do not bow down before it in their bodies, yet they make all the faculties of their souls to bow and stoop unto it; they love and desire it, they rejoice and delight in having of it, they are grieved and troubled for nothing so much as the parting with it, nor fear any thing so much as the losing of it.

But they will say again, we do not sacrifice to our bags, nor burn incense to our estates; we never did, nor intend to offer so much as a lamb or calf unto it! It is true, they do not, but they offer that which is far better, they offer the poor to it, suffering them to perish with hunger, thirst, and cold, rather than relieve them with that necessary maintenance which God hath put into their hands for them; they offer their own bodies to it, exposing them to heats and colds, to dangers and hazards both by sea and land, and all for money; yea, they offer their own souls to it likewise as a whole burnt-offering, giving them to lie scorching in hell flames to eternity, and that upon no other account but to get money: and tell me which are the greatest fools, and the most odious idolaters, such as offer beasts to the sun and flames, or such as offer themselves both soul and body to dirt and clay? We cannot but all acknowledge the latter to be far the worse, and, by consequence, the

covetous man to be the greatest idolater in the world, and that too only because he is a covetous man.

Moreover, is not extortion and oppression a sin? and yet we all know that it is the love of money that is the only cause of it. Is not strife and contention a sin? whence comes it but from our lusting after money, James iv. 1. Is not perjury a sin? Is not corruption of justice a sin? Is not cheating and cozenage a sin? Is not pride and haughtiness a sin? Is not unrighteous dealing betwixt man and man a sin? Is not theft and robbery a sin? Is not treason and rebellion a sin? Are not all these sins, and great ones too? But whence spring these poisonous fruits into the lives of men, but from the bitter root of covetousness in their hearts? It is the love of money that makes these sins so rife among us: it is this that makes men forswear themselves, and cozen others: it is this that oft-times makes fathers ruin their children, and children to long for the death of their fathers: it is this that makes neighbours go to law, and brethren themselves to be at variance: it is this that makes men strive to overreach each other, and to blind the eyes of those they deal with: it is this that hath caused some to murder others, and others to destroy themselves. What shall I say more? There is no impiety that can be committed against God, nor injury that can be offered unto men, but the love of money hath been the cause of it in others, and will be so in us, unless it be timely prevented; and therefore it may well be termed the root of all evil of sin.

And it being the root from whence all the evil of sin springs, it must needs be the root of the evil of punishment and misery too: misery and punishment being the necessary consequence of sin. Indeed this sin carries its misery along with it, as Seneca himself saw by the mere light of nature, saying, *Nulla avaritia sine pœna est, quamvis satis sit ipsa pœnarum, No avarice is without punishment, though it be itself punishment enough.* For what a torment is it for a man to be always thirsty, and never able to quench his thirst: yet this is the misery of every covetous man, whose thirst after money can never be satisfied, and who is so desirous of having more, that he can never enjoy with comfort what he hath; loving money so well, that he grudgeth himself the use of it. Hence the foresaid author observed, that *in nullum avarus bonus est, in se ipsam pessimus, The covetous man is good to none, but worst of all to himself.* And as this is the natural consequent of this sin in itself, so is it the ordinary punishment that God inflicts upon men for it, not suffering them to take any pleasure in the use of what they love, Eccles. vi. 1, 2. And besides

that, what cares and fears, what labours and travels, what dangers and hazards doth the love of money put men upon? How do they rack their brains and break their rest to get it; and when it is gotten, what fears are they always in lest they should lose it again? What grief and trouble do the poor wretches undergo for every petty loss that befalls them? So that every covetous man is not only miserable, but therefore miserable because covetous.

But if their misery be so great in this life, how great will it be in that to come? concerning which there are two things to be observed: first, that the very having of riches makes it very difficult to get to heaven, Matt. xix. 23, 24, 25. Luke xvi. 19, 22. Hence Agar was afraid of them, Prov. xxx. 8. Neither do we ever read of any of the patriarchs, prophets, or the saints recorded in Scripture, to have been guilty of this sin, unless Baruch, who is reprov'd for it, Jer. xlv. 5.

And as the having of money makes it difficult to get to heaven, so the loving of it makes it impossible to keep out of hell. For so long as a man is covetous, he is liable to every temptation, ready so catch at every bait that the devil throws before him; so that he is led by him as he pleaseth, till at length he be utterly destroyed, 1 Tim. vi. 9. And therefore the same Apostle elsewhere tells us, that the covetous have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, but the wrath of God will most certainly fall upon them, Eph. v. 5, 6. But the wrath of God is the greatest evil of punishment that it is possible for men to bear: indeed it is that which being once incensed makes hell-fire. And yet we see that the heat of our love to money will enkindle the flames of God's wrath against us, yea, and such flames too as will never be quenched, Mark ix. 44. And so for the little seeming transient pleasure they take in getting or keeping money now, they must live in misery and contempt, in shame and torment for evermore.

Thus now we see that the love of money will not only put us upon the evil of sin, but it will also bring the evil of punishment upon us; both which the Apostle here, 1 Tim. vi. ver. 9, 10. imputes to this sin. And therefore he both well may and must be understood of both these sorts of evil, when he saith, that *the love of money is the root of all evil*; which, the premises considered, I hope none can deny. And need I then heap up more arguments to dissuade men from this sin, and to prevail with them to leave doting upon the world and loving money? Is not this one argument of itself sufficient? For, is it possible for us to indulge ourselves in this sin, now we know it is the root of all evil? and that if we still love money, there is no sin

so great but we may fall into it, and no misery so heavy but it will fall upon us. Surely if this consideration will not prevail upon us to despise and contemn, rather than to love and desire this world, for my part I know not what can. Only this I know, that so long as men continue in this sin, all writing and preaching will be in vain to them ; and so will their hearing be, their going to church, their reading the Scriptures, their hearing them read and expounded to them ; all this will signify nothing, this root of all evil is still within us, and it will bring forth its bitter fruit, do what we can. And therefore as ever we desire to profit by what we hear, as ever we desire to avoid any one sin whatsoever, to know what happiest means to escape either present torment or eternal misery, as ever we desire to be real saints, and to manifest ourselves to be so, to go to heaven, and live with God and Christ for ever, let not our affections be entangled any longer in the briars and thorns of this lower world, let us beware of loving money : *If riches increase, let us not set our hearts upon them*, Psal. lxii. 10. but scorn and despise them hereafter as much as ever heretofore we have desired or loved them.

But I cannot, I dare not but in charity believe and hope, that by this time my readers are something weaned from their doting upon this present world, and desire to know how they may for the future get off their affections from it, so as to have this root of all evil extirpated, and quite plucked up from within them. I hope this is now the desire of all, or at least of most of them ; and therefore I shall now endeavour to shew them how they may infallibly accomplish and effect it. In order thereto,

1. Let such persons often consider with themselves how unsuitable the things of this world are for the affection of love, which was designed only for the chiefest good. When God implanted the affection of love within us, he did not intend it should be the root of all evil but of all good unto us ; and therefore he did not give it us to place it fondly upon such low and mean objects as this world presents unto us, but that we should love himself with all our hearts and souls, Deut. vi, 5. And surely he infinitely deserves our love more than such trash can do.

2. Let them remember that so long as they love money they may pretend what they please, they do not love God, 1 John ii. 15. nor Christ, Matt. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26. and by consequence they have no true religion at all in them, James i. 27.

3. Let them often read and study our Saviour's sermon upon the Mount, where he pronounces the meek and low, not the

rich and mighty, to be blessed, Matt. v. 3, 4. and weigh those strong and undeniable arguments which he brings, to prevail upon us not to take thought for the world, nor trouble our heads about the impertinent concerns of this transient life, Matt. vi. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

4. Let them labour to confirm and strengthen their trust and confidence on the promises of God, who hath assured us, that if we love and fear him, he will take care of us, and provide all things necessary for us, Matt. vi. 33. This is the great argument which the Apostle uses, Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

5. Let them remember that they are called to higher things than this world is able to afford them; the Christian is an high and heavenly calling; we are called by it, and invited to a kingdom and eternal glory, 1 Thess. ii. 12. and therefore ought not to spend our time about such low and paltry trash as riches and wealth.

6. Let them get above the world, let their conversation be in heaven, and then they will soon look down upon all things here below as beneath their concern. *Vilescent temporalia, cum desiderantur æterna*, said St. Gregory. He that seriously thinks upon and desires heaven, cannot but vilify and despise earth. Oh what fools and madmen do the blessed angels, and the glorified saints in heaven, think us poor mortals upon earth to be, when they see us busying ourselves about getting a little refined dirt, and in the mean while neglecting those transcendent glories which themselves enjoy, although they be offered to us!

7. Let them never suffer the vanity of all things here below to go out of their minds; but remember still, that get what they can, it is but vanity and vexation of spirit, as Solomon himself asserted upon his own experience, though he, be sure, had more than any of us are ever likely to enjoy. And let them not only often repeat the words, but endeavour to get themselves convinced throughly of the truth of them, which their own experiences, duly weighed and rightly applied, will soon do.

8. Let it be their daily prayer to Almighty God, that he would take off their affections from the world, and incline them to himself, as David did, saying, *Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness*, Psal. cxix. 36,

To all these means, let them add the constant and serious consideration of what they have here read, that the love of money is the root of all evil; assuring themselves that if they will not believe it now, it is not long before they will all find it but too true, by their own sad and woeful experience; when

they shall be stripped of their present enjoyments, and so turn bankrupts in another world, where they will be cast into prison without ever having a farthing to relieve themselves, or so much as a drop of water to cool their inflamed tongues.

By these and such like means none of us but may suppress the love of money in us, which is the root of all evil ; and so avoid or prevent all the evil which otherwise will proceed from it. Whether any of my readers will be persuaded to use these means or no, I know not ; however let me tell them, that if they are loath to strive to get their affections deadened to the world, it is an infallible sign that they are too much in love with it, and that this root and seed of all manner of evil remains in them ; nor can it be expected they will be persuaded to any one duty whatsoever, until they are first prevailed upon to do this, even to mortify their lusts and affections to the things of this world. For so long as those are predominant within us, no grace whatsoever can be exerted, nor duty performed, nor any sin avoided by us.

But O how happy would it be, if it should please the most high God, to set what I have here said so home upon any, as to induce them to set themselves seriously for the future to the eradicating or rooting up this love of money out of their hearts ! What a holy, what a blessed, what a peculiar people should we then be, and how zealous of good works ! Then we should take all opportunities of performing our devotions to Almighty God ; then we should have as many at the sacrament as at a sermon ; then our churches would be filled all the week, as well as on Sundays, and the eternal God constantly worshipped with reverence and godly fear ; then we should take delight in clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and relieving the oppressed ; then there would be no such thing as cheating and cozenage, as lying and perjury, as strife and contention amongst us. But we should all walk hand in hand together in the ways of piety, justice, and charity upon earth, until at length we shall come to heaven, where we shall be so far from loving or desiring money, that we shall account it as it is, even dross and dirt ; where our affections shall be wholly taken up with the contemplation of the chiefest good, and we shall solace ourselves in the enjoyments of his perfections for evermore.

THOUGHTS

UPON

WORLDLY RICHES.

SEC. II.

TIMOTHY after his conversion to the Christian faith, being found to be a man of great parts, learning, and piety, and so every way qualified for the work of the ministry, St. Paul, who had planted a church at Ephesus, the metropolis or chief city of all Asia, left him to dress or propagate it, after his departure from it, giving him power to ordain elders or priests, and to visit and exercise jurisdiction over them, to see they did not teach false doctrines, 1 Tim. i. 3. That they be unblameable in their lives and conversations, 1 Tim. v. 7. and to exercise authority over them, in case they be otherwise, 1 Tim. v. 19. And therefore it cannot in reason but be acknowledged that Timothy was the bishop, superintendant, or visiter of all the Asian churches, as he was always asserted to have been by the Fathers of the primitive church, as Eusebius reports, saying, that Timothy is reported to have been the first bishop of the province of Ephesus. Be sure he had the oversight of all the churches that were planted there; and not only in Ephesus itself, but likewise in all Asia, which was subject then to his ecclesiastical power and jurisdiction.

And hence it is that the apostle St. Paul, in his first Epistle to him, gives him directions how to manage so great a work, and to discharge so great a trust as was committed to him, both as bishop and priest; both how to ordain and govern others, and likewise how to preach himself the Gospel of Christ. And having spent the whole Epistle in directions of this sort, in the close of it, as it were at the foot of the Epistle, he subjoins one general caution to be constantly observed by him, *Charge them that are rich, &c.* Which words, though first directed to Timothy, were in him intended for all succeeding ministers, and preachers of the Gospel; such I mean who are

solemnly ordained and set apart for this work. We are all obliged to observe the command which is here laid upon us, without which we are never likely to do any good upon them that hear us: for so long as their minds are set altogether upon riches, and the things of this world, we may preach our hearts out, before we can ever persuade them to mind heaven and eternal happiness in good earnest. This St. Paul knew well enough, and therefore hath left this not only as his advice and counsel, but as a strict command and duty incumbent upon the preachers of the Gospel in all ages, that they *charge them that are rich*, &c. where it may be observed in the first place, now we are expressly enjoined to *charge them that are rich*, &c. a word much to be observed. The apostle doth not say, desire, beseech, counsel, or admonish the rich, but charge and command them that are rich. The word properly signifies such a charge as the judges at an assize or sessions make in the king's name, enjoining his subjects to observe the established laws and statutes of the kingdom. And so the word is always used in Scripture for the strictest way of commanding any thing to be observed or done, as Acts v. 28. *Did not we straitly command you?* Luke v. 14. *He charged him to tell no man.* Thus therefore it is that we are here enjoined to charge the rich in the name of the King of kings, not to be high minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches, &c.

And this is the proper notion, and the only true way of preaching the word of God; which therefore in Scripture is ordinarily expressed by the word *κηρύσσειν*, which properly signifies to publish or proclaim, as heralds do, the will and pleasure of the prince, and in his name to command the people to observe it. Thus we are enjoined to preach the word of God, by publishing his will and pleasure to men; charging them in his name to obey and practise it. For we come not to them in our own names, but in his that created and redeemed them; and therefore, although we neither have nor pretend to any power or authority over them, from ourselves; yet by virtue of the commission which we have received from the universal and supreme Monarch of the world, we not only lawfully may, but are in duty bound, to charge and enjoin all in his name, to observe what he hath commanded them. Insomuch, that although we pretend not to divine inspiration, or immediate revelations from God, such as the prophets had; yet we, preaching the same word which they did, may and often ought to use the same authority which they used, saying, as they did, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts.* For whatsoever is written in the Scriptures, is as certainly God's word now, as it was

when first inspired or revealed to them. And therefore it cannot be denied, but that we have as much power to charge upon all, the observation of what is there written, as they ever had, we being sent to preach and proclaim the will of God unto all, by the same person as they were. Hence it is that the apostle in the name of God, commands Titus, and in him all succeeding ministers of the gospel, to speak or preach the word of God, to exhort and rebuke with all authority, Tit. ii. 15. From whence nothing can be more plain, than that it is our duty to preach with authority, as those who have received power from God, to make known his will and pleasure to all men; or, as the apostle here expressly words it, to *charge them not to be high minded*, and the like.

But this I fear may be a very ungrateful subject to many, and therefore I should not have insisted so long upon it, but that there is a kind of necessity for it. For I verily believe, that the non-observance of this hath been, and still is, the principal reason why people receive so little benefit by hearing of sermons, as they usually do; for they look upon sermons only as popular discourses, rehearsed by one of their fellow-creatures, which they may censure, approve, or reject, as themselves see good. And we ourselves, I fear, have been too faulty, or at least remiss, in this particular; in that when we preach, we ordinarily make a long harangue or oration concerning some point in polemical, dogmatical, or practical divinity, and use only some moral persuasions to press upon our auditors, the observance of what we say, without interposing, or exercising the authority which is committed to us, so as to charge them in the name of the most high God, to observe and practise what we declare and prove unto them to be his will, and by consequence their duty. But for my own part, did I think that preaching consisted only in explaining some point in divinity, and using only moral arguments to persuade men to perform their duty to God and man, I should not think it worth my while to do it, because I could not expect to do any good at all by it. For all the moral arguments in the world can never be so strong to draw us from sin, as our own natural corruptions are to drive us into it. And therefore we can never expect to do any good upon men, either by our logic or rhetoric; but our arguments must be fetched from on high, even from the eternal God himself, or else they are never likely to profit or prevail upon them. We must charge and command them in God's name, or else we had as good say nothing.

It is true, did we, who preach God's word, propose nothing

se to ourselves, but to tickle men's ears, and please their fancies, and so to ingratiate ourselves into their love and favour, it would be easy to entertain them with discourses of another nature, stuffed with such fine words, quaint phrases, and high notions, as would be very pleasing and acceptable unto them. But I must take leave to say, that we dare not do it; for we know, that as our auditors must give an account of their hearing, so it is not long before we also must give an account of our preaching too; for so God himself hath told us beforehand by his apostle, Heb. xiii. 17. But how shall we be able to look the eternal God in the face; yea, or to look our auditors in the face at that time, if instead of charging their duty upon them, in order to their eternal salvation, we should put them off with general discourses, which signify nothing, only to please and gratify them whilst we remain with them; no, we dare not do it, and therefore I wish men would not expect it from us; for we must not hazard our own eternal salvation to gain their temporal favour or applause. And therefore, seeing God hath been pleased to entrust us so far with men's souls, as to direct them in the way to eternal life, howsoever they resent it, we are bound in duty, both to God, to them, and ourselves, to deal plainly with them, and to use the authority which he hath here committed to us, where he hath expressly commanded us in his name, to *charge them that are rich in this world, &c.*

Where I desire the reader to observe in the next place, that we of the clergy are not only empowered to charge the poorer or meaner sort of people, who, by reason of their extreme poverty and want, may seem inferior to us, but even rich men too; *charge them*, saith the Apostle, *that are rich in this world.* And the reason is, because we come unto them in his name, who gives them all the riches they do enjoy, and can take them away again when he himself pleaseth; so that he can make the poor rich, and the rich poor, when he pleaseth, and therefore the poor and rich are all alike to him; his power and authority is the same over both; and therefore we, coming in his name, are ordered to make no distinction, but to charge the one as well as the other; yea, here we are particularly commanded to *charge them that are rich.*

Which is the next thing to be considered in these words, even whom the Apostle means by them that are *rich in this world*; which is a question that needs a serious resolution. For many men, not thinking themselves as yet to be rich enough, will be apt to conclude from thence, that they are not to be reckoned amongst those whom the apostle here calls rich

in this world. But whatsoever they may think of themselves, I believe there are but few, except the very poor, who in a Scripture sense are not rich men. For whatsoever any have over and above their necessary maintenance, that the Scriptures call riches, as is plain from Agar's wish, *Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me*, Prov. xxx. 8. From whence it is easy to observe, that as nothing but the want of convenient food is poverty; so whatsoever a man hath over and above his convenient or necessary food, is properly his riches; and so he that hath it is in a Scripture sense a rich man, who is therefore called here in my text *πλοῦσιος, quasi πολυούσιος*, one that hath much substance, or more than he hath necessary occasion for. And therefore, although some may be richer than others, yet I believe the generality may be justly reckoned in the number of the rich men here spoken of, at least all such as by the blessing of God have not only what is necessary for their present maintenance, but likewise something to spare, and so may all come under the notion of those whom we are here commanded to charge not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, &c.

Having thus considered the act which we are here commanded to exert, and the object, the rich of this world, we are now to consider the subject matter, what that is which we are here commanded to charge upon them; but that is here expressly set down in several particulars, all which I shall endeavour to explain as they lie in order.

First, That they *be not high-minded*; a necessary caution for rich men. For riches are very apt to puff men up with vain and foolish conceits of themselves, so as to think themselves to be so much better, by how much they are richer than other people; but this is a grand mistake, which we are here enjoined to use the utmost of our power and skill to rectify, by *charging them that are rich not to be high-minded*; that is, not to think highly and proudly of themselves, because they are richer or wealthier than other men, but to be every way as humble in their own eyes, and as lowly-minded in the enjoyment of all temporal blessings, as if they enjoyed nothing; as considering,

I. How much soever they have, they are no way really the better for it.

1. Not in their souls; they are never the wiser nor holier, nor more acceptable unto God by their being rich, Eccles. ix. 1. Job xxxiv. 19.

2. Not in their bodies; they are never the stronger, nor

healthier, nor freer from pain and trouble, nor yet longer lived than others.

3. Not in their minds ; their consciences are never the quieter, their hearts never the freer from cares and fears, neither can they sleep better than other people, Eccles. v. 12.

4. Nor yet in their estate and condition.

1. Not in this life ; for riches can never satisfy them, nor by consequence make them happy ; but they may still be as miserable in the enjoyment, as in the want of all things, Eccles. v. 11.

2. Nor yet in the life to come ; they are never the nearer heaven, by being higher upon earth ; their gold and silver can never purchase an inheritance for them in the land of Canaan, James ii. 5.

II. They are so far from being better, that they are rather much worse for their having abundance here below.

1. They have more temptations to sin, to luxury, to covetousness, to the love of this world, to the neglect of their duty to God, to pride and self-conceitedness, to security and presumption, Luke xii. 19.

2. It is harder for them to get to heaven than it is for others ; and by consequence, the richer they are, the more danger they are in of being miserable for ever, Matt. xix. 23. Whence our Saviour himself denounceth a woe upon them that are rich, Luke vi. 24. and St. James bids them *weep and howl for their miseries*, James v. 1. and therefore advises us to rejoice rather at poverty than riches, James i. 9, 10. Now these things being considered, as spoken by God himself, none can deny but that the rich are most certainly in a worse condition than the poor ; and, by consequence, that men have no cause to be proud, or high minded, nor to glory in their riches, Jer. ix. 23. And therefore whatsoever outward blessings God hath bestowed upon us, *let us not be high-minded, but fear*, Rom. xi. 20.

Secondly, Nor trust in uncertain riches, which I confess is a very hard lesson for a rich man to learn, nothing being more difficult than to have riches, and not to trust in them, as our Saviour himself intimates, in explaining the one by the other, as things very rarely severed, Mark x. 23, 24. But certainly it is altogether as foolish a thing to trust in riches, as it is to be proud of them. For,

1. They of themselves can stand us in no stead, they cannot defend us from any evil, nor procure us any good : they cannot of themselves either feed us, or clothe us, or refresh us, nor be any ways advantageous to us, without God's blessing,

Prov. xi. 4. how much less can they be able to deliver us from wrath to come. No, we may take it for a certain truth, our riches may much further our eternal misery, but they can never conduce any thing to our future happiness.

2. If we trust in them, be sure they will fail us, and bring us into misery and desolation ; for to trust in any thing but God, is certainly one of the highest sins we can be guilty of ; it is in plain terms idolatry ; and therefore *he that trusteth in riches is sure to fall*, Prov. xi. 28. for this is to deny God. Job xxxi. 24, 25, 28.

3. They are but uncertain riches, *they make themselves wings and fly away*, Prov. xxiii. 5. They are in continual motion, ebbing and flowing, and never continuing in one stay. So that you are never sure of keeping them one day ; and what reason then can we have to trust on them ? especially considering, that they are not only uncertain, but uncertainty itself, as the word here signifies, *Trust not in the uncertainty of riches*.

But in the living God ; he, he is to be the only object of our trust, whether we have or have not any thing else to trust on ; or, to speak more properly, there is nothing that we can upon good grounds make our trust and confidence, but only him, who governs and disposeth of all things, according to his own pleasure. So that it is he and he alone that giveth us all things richly to enjoy. It is not our wit or policy, it is not our strength or industry, it is not our trading or trafficking in the world, it is none but God that giveth us what we have, Dent. viii. 18. Prov. x. 22. And as it is he that maketh men rich, so he can make them poor again, when he himself pleaseth ; and they have cause to fear he will do so too, unless they observe what is here charged upon them.

There are four duties still behind, which we are here commanded to charge all those who are rich to observe.

I. That *they do good*. In treating of which, I might shew the several qualifications required to the making up of an action good ; as that the matter of it must be good, as commanded, or at least allowed by God ; that the manner of performing it be good, as that it be done obediently, understandingly, willingly, cheerfully, humbly, and sincerely ; and that the end be good too, so as that it be directed ultimately to the glory of God. But not to insist upon that now, I shall only consider what kind of good works the rich are here commanded to do, as they are rich men. And they are two, works of piety, and works of charity.

1. They are here commanded to do works of piety : where by works of piety, I mean not their loving and fearing, and

honouring of God, nor yet their praying to him, their hearing his word, or praising his name, for such works of piety as these are, the poorest as well as the richest persons amongst us are bound to do; whereas the Apostle here speaks only of such works as they who are rich are bound to do, upon that account because they are so. And therefore by works of piety here, I understand such works as tend to the honour of his name, to the performance of worship and homage to him, to the encouragement of his ministers, the propagating of his Gospel, and the conversion of sinners to him; all which they are bound to do, to the utmost of their power, out of the estates which for these purposes he hath entrusted with them. For thus they are expressly commanded to honour the Lord with all their substance, or riches, and with the first-fruits of all their increase, Prov. iii. 9. And the reason is, because God is the universal proprietor, the head landlord of all the world, and we have nothing but what we hold under him; neither are we any more than tenants at will to him, who may fine us at his own pleasure, or throw us out of possession whensoever he sees good. Now lest we should forget this, even upon what tenure it is that we hold our estates, God hath enjoined us to pay him, as it were, a quit-rent, or tribute out of what we possess, as an acknowledgment that it is by his favour and blessing alone that we do possess it. So that whatsoever we do, or are able to offer to him, is but a due debt which we owe him; which if we neglect to pay him, we lose our tenure, and forfeit what we have to the Lord of the manor, the supreme Possessor of the world. Hence it is, that in all ages, they who were truly pious, and had a due sense of God upon their hearts, were always very careful to pay this their homage unto God; insomuch, that many of them never thought they could give enough to any pious use, wherein to testify their acknowledgment of God's dominion over them, and his right and propriety in what they had. A notable instance whereof we have in the children of Israel; for when the tabernacle was to be built for the service and worship of God, they were so far from being backward in contributing towards it, that they presently brought more than could be used in the building of it, Exod. xxxvi. 5, 6, 7. So it was too in the building of the temple, which David, and the chiefs or nobles of Israel, made great preparations for, 1 Chron. xxix. 6, 7, 8. And that they did this, thereby to acknowledge God to be the Lord and Giver of all, is plain from the following words, ver. 11, 12, 13. The same was also observed in the building of the second temple, as the raising the first out of its rubbish, wherein it had lain for many

years. And as for Christians, I need not tell you how forward those who have been truly pious, have always been in doing such works of piety, seeing most of the churches in Christendom, or be sure in this nation, have been erected by particular persons. And it is very observable, that the more eminent any place or age hath been for piety and devotion, the more pious works have been always done in it, for the service and worship of Almighty God; which plainly shews, that where such works are wanting, whatsoever pretences they may make, there is no such thing as true piety, and the fear of God. And therefore, as ever we desire to manifest ourselves to be what we profess, true Christians indeed, men fearing God, and hating covetousness, we must take all opportunities to express our thankfulness unto God for what we have, by devoting as much as we can of it to his service and honour.

2. Besides these works of piety towards God, the rich are enjoined also works of charity towards the poor, which though they have an immediate reference to the poor, yet God looks upon them as given to himself, Prov. xiv. 31. xix. 17. Matt. xxv. 40. Hence it is that God accepts of such works as these also, for part of the tribute which we owe him; whereby we acknowledge the receipt of what we have from him, and express our thankfulness unto him for it, without which we have no ground to expect a blessing upon what we have, nor that it should be really good to us. *For*, as the apostle tells us, *every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving*, not else, 1 Tim. iv. 4. But no thanksgiving is acceptable but that which is expressed by works as well as words. And therefore it is necessary for us to pay this duty and service to God out of what we have, in order to the cleansing and sanctifying the residue of our estates unto us, without which we have not the lawful use of what we possess; but every thing we have is polluted and unclean to us, as our Saviour himself intimates, Luke xi. 41. A thing much to be considered. For I verily believe that the great reason why so many estates are blasted so soon, and brought to nothing amongst us, is because men do not render unto God his duty and tribute out of what they have, and therefore it is no wonder that God in his providence turns them out of possession, and gives their estates to other persons, who shall be better tenants to him, and be careful to pay him the duties which he requires of them. And therefore, in order to men's securing their estates to themselves and posterity, it is absolutely necessary that they observe the duty which we are here recommended to charge upon all

that are rich in this world, even to do good with what they have, and not only so, but

II. To be *rich too in good works*; that is, not only to do good, but to do as much good as they are able with their riches, so as to proportion their good works to the riches which God hath given them wherewith to do them, according to the apostle's direction, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Thus in the place before quoted, Luke xi 41. where our Saviour bids the Pharisees to give alms of such things as they have, his words are τὰ ἐνόητα δότε τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην give alms as much as ye are able, for so the words properly signify. And verily whatsoever we do, unless it be as much as we can, God will not look upon us as doing any thing at all: for we must not think to compound with him. When he hath given us all we have, he expects that we render all that he requires of us, that is, as much as we are able to pay unto him. As if a man owes you money, you will not accept of part instead of the whole; so neither will God from us; we all owe him as much as we are able to devote to his service and honour, and we must not think to put him off with part of it; for he reckons that he receives nothing from us, unless it be proportionable to what he hath bestowed upon us. But how little soever it is that we give or offer to him, if it be but answerable to our estates, it will be accepted by him. This our Saviour himself hath assured us of, Mark xii. 43, 44. From whence we may certainly conclude, that there is not the poorest person whatsoever but may be as rich in good works as the richest, because God doth not measure the goodness of our works by their bulk or quantity, but by the proportion which they bear to our estates: so that he that gives a penny may do as good a work as he that gives a pound, yea, and a better too, because his may be as much as he is able, whereas the other's is not. I wish all men would seriously weigh and consider this, lest otherwise they go out of the world without ever having done one good work in it: for we may assure ourselves, he that is not thus rich in good works, doth no good at all with his riches.

But it is farther to be considered here, that this expression, *rich in good works*, implies that good works are indeed our principal riches; and that men must not compute their riches so much from what they have, as from what they give and devote to God. For what we have is not ours, but God's in our hands; but what we give is ours in God's hands, and he acknowledgeth himself our debtor for it, in that he tells us that we lend it to him, and promiseth to pay it us again, Prov. xix. 17. And therefore they who cast up their accounts to know

how rich they are, ought not to reckon upon what they have lying by them, nor upon their houses and lands that are made over to them, nor yet upon what is owing to them by men ; but should reckon only upon what they have given to pious or charitable uses, upon what treasure they have laid up in heaven. For whatsoever they may think at present, I dare assure them, that will be found to be their only riches another day. And therefore if any one desires to be rich indeed, let him take my advice, do what good he can with the riches he hath, and then he will be rich enough : for this is the way to be rich in good works. But in order unto that, he must likewise observe what follows, to be

III. *Ready to distribute* ; that is, ready upon all occasions to pay his tribute unto God, whensoever he in his providence calls for it ; taking all opportunities of doing good, and glad when he can find them, Gal. vi. 10. Thus therefore whensoever any opportunities present themselves of expressing our thankfulness unto God, by works either of piety or charity, whatsoever other business may be neglected, we must be sure to lay hold on that. For I dare say, that there is none but will grant me that there is all the reason in the world that God should be served in the first place, and that he should have the first fruits of all our increase, Prov. iii. 9. Exod. xxiii. 19. Deut. xxvi. 2. And therefore we cannot but acknowledge, that works of piety towards God and of charity to the poor, or as the Scripture calls them in general good works, are always to be done in the first place ; and whatsoever other works may be omitted, besure they must not. But we ought still to be as ready to pay our duties unto God, as we are to receive any thing from him, as ready to give as to receive ; and by consequence as men let no opportunities slip wherein they can increase their estates, they are much less to let any opportunities pass wherein they can any way improve their estates for God's glory and others' good ; but they ought to be ready upon all occasions to distribute what they can upon charitable and pious uses.

IV. *Willing to communicate* ; as we must do it with a ready hand, so we must do it with a willing heart too. Thus we are enjoined to serve God willingly, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. and cheerfully, 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. Indeed God accepts of none but free-will offerings. If we be not as willing to do good works as we are to have wherewith to do them, we may be confident God will never accept of them. And therefore in plain terms, if any one would be rich in good works as becometh Christians, and as it is our interest to be, they must not stay till

they be compelled, persuaded, or entreated by others to do them ; but they must set upon them of their own accord, out of pure obedience unto God, and from a due sense of their constant dependence upon him, and manifold obligations to him ; yea, so as to take pleasure in nothing in the world so much as in paying their respects and service to Almighty God, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, 15, 17.

Now to encourage the rich to employ their estates thus in doing good, the Apostle adds in the last place, that this is the way to *lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* A strange expression ! yea such a one, that had not St. Paul himself spoke it, some would have been apt to have excepted against it for an error or mistake. What, good works the foundation of eternal life ? No, that is not the meaning of it ; but that good works are the foundation of that blessed sentence which they shall receive, who are made partakers of eternal life, as is plain from our Saviour's own words, Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36.

And verily although there be no such intrinsic value in good works, whereby they that do them can merit any thing from God by their doing of them ; yet nothing can be more certain, than that God of his infinite mercy in Jesus Christ will so accept of them, as to reward us for them in the world to come. For this our Saviour himself doth clearly intimate to us, in the place before quoted, as also, Matt. vi. 20. Luke xii. 33. xvi. 9. that is, distribute and employ the unrighteous or deceitful riches you have in this world in such a way as is most pleasing and acceptable unto God, that so he may be your friend, and receive you into everlasting habitations, when these transient and unstable riches fail you. From whence I beg leave to observe, that to do good with what we have is the only way whereby to improve our estates for our own good, so as to be the better for them both in this and also in the world to come. The Rabbins have a good saying, that good works are the salt of riches, that which preserves them from corruption, and makes them savoury and acceptable unto God, as also useful and profitable to the owners. Unless we do good with our estates, we forfeit our title to them by the non-payment of the rent-charge which God hath reserved to himself upon them ; and therefore we may justly expect every moment to be cast out of possession ; or howsoever though he may forbear us a while, yea so long as we are in this world, what good, what benefit, what comfort shall we have of our estates in the world to come ? certainly no more than the rich man in the Gospel had, when he lay scorching in hell-fire, and had not so much

as a drop of water to cool his inflamed tongue. Whereas on the other side, if we do good with our estates, if we devote them to the service of God, and to the relief of the poor, by this means we shall not only secure the possession of them to ourselves here, but shall also receive comfort and benefit from them in the world to come; so that our estates will not die with us, but we shall receive benefit by them, and have cause to bless God for them unto all eternity: the apostle himself assuring us, that by this means we shall *lay up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come, so as to lay hold on eternal life.*

This one argument being duly weighed, I hope I need not use any more to persuade men to do good with what they have, and to make the best use of it they can. For I know I write to Christians, at least to such as profess themselves to be so; and therefore to such as believe there is another world besides this we live in, and by consequence that it concerns them to provide for that, which, as I have shown, we may do in a plentiful manner, by the right improvement of what God hath entrusted with us in this world. What then do the generality of men mean to be so slack and remiss in laying hold on all opportunities of doing good! what, do they think it possible to lose any thing they do for God! or do they think it possible to employ their estates better than for his service and honour who gave them to us! I cannot believe any think so; and therefore must needs advise the rich again and again not to lay up their talent in a napkin, but to use their estates to the best advantage for God and their own souls, that so when they go from hence into the other world, they may be received into eternal glory, with a *well done good and faithful servants, enter you into your Master's joy.*

But fearing lest these moral persuasions may not prevail so much upon my readers as I desire they might, they must give me leave farther to tell them, that I am here commanded to *charge them that are rich in this world, to be rich also in good works*: and therefore seeing, as I have shown, there are few but who in a Scripture-sense are rich in this world, in obedience to this command which here is laid upon me, in the name of the most high God, I charge you, and not I only, but the eternal God himself, he wills and requires all those whom he hath blessed with riches in this world, that *they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches*, but that they put their whole trust and confidence only in the living God, whose all things are, and who gives us whatsoever we have: that they do good with what he hath put into their hands, lay-

ing it out upon works of piety towards him, and of charity to the poor, that his worship may be decently performed, and the poor liberally relieved; that they be *rich in good works*, striving to excel each other in doing good in their generation; that they be *ready* every moment to *distribute*, and always *willing to communicate* to every good work, wherein they can pay their homage and express their thankfulness to him for what they have.

THOUGHTS

UPON

SELF-DENIAL.

THE most glorious sight questionless that was ever to be seen upon the face of the earth, was to see the Son of God here ; to see the supreme Being and Governor of the world here ; to see the Creator of all things conversing here with his own creatures ; to see God himself with the nature, and in the shape of man, walking about upon the surface of the earth ; and discoursing with silly mortals here ; and that with so much majesty and humility mixed together, that every expression might seem a demonstration that he was both God and man. It is true, we were not so happy as to see this blessed sight ; howsoever, it is our happiness that we have heard of it, and have it so exactly described to us, that we may as clearly apprehend it as if we had seen it : yea, our Saviour himself hath pronounced those in a peculiar manner blessed, *who have not seen, and yet have believed*, John xx. 29. that is, who never saw Christ in the manger, nor in the temple ; who never saw him prostrate before his Father in the garden, nor fastened by men unto his cross ; who never saw him preaching the Gospel, nor working miracles to confirm it ; who never saw him before his passion, nor after his resurrection, and yet do as firmly believe whatsoever is recorded of him, as if they had seen it with their eyes. Such persons our blessed Saviour himself asserts to be truly blessed, as having such a faith as is the substance of things hoped for, and *the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1.

Hence therefore, although we lived not in our Saviour's time, and therefore saw him not do as never man did, nor heard him speak as never man spake, we may notwithstanding be as blessed, or rather more blessed than they that did. If we do but give credit to what is asserted of him, and receive and believe what is represented to us in his holy Gospels,

where by faith we may still see him working miracles, and hear him declaring his will and pleasure to his disciples, as really as if we had then been by him. And therefore whatsoever we read in the Gospel that he spake, we are to hearken as diligently to it, as if we heard him speak it with our own ears, and be as careful in the performance of it, as if we had received it from his own mouth : for so we do, though not immediately, yet by the infallible pen of them that did so. And seeing he never spake in vain, or to no purpose, nor suffered an idle or superfluous word to proceed out of his sacred and divine mouth ; whatsoever he asserted, we are to look upon as necessary to be believed, because he asserted it. And whatsoever he commanded, we are to look upon as necessary to be observed, because he hath commanded it ; for we must not think that his assertions are so frivolous, or his commands so impertinent, that it is no great matter whether we believe the one and obey the other, or no : no, if we expect to be justified and saved by him, he expects to be believed and obeyed by us, without which he will not look upon us as his disciples, nor by consequence as Christians, but strangers and aliens to him, whatsoever our professions and pretences are.

It is true, we live in an age wherein Christianity in the general notion of it is highly courted, all sects and parties amongst us making their pretences to it, whatsoever opinions or circumstances they differ in, be sure they all agree in the external profession of the Christian religion, and by consequence in the acknowledgment that they ought to be Christians indeed. But I fear that men are generally mistaken about the notion of true Christianity, not thinking it to be so high and divine a thing as really it is ; for if they had true and clear conceptions of it, they would never fancy themselves to be Christians, upon such low and pitiful grounds as usually they do, making as if Christianity consisted in nothing else, but in the external performance of some few particular duties, and in adhering to them that profess it ; whereas Christianity is a thing of a much higher and far more noble nature, than such would have it ; insomuch, that did we but rightly understand it, methinks we could not but be taken with it, so as to resolve for the future to the utmost of our power to live up to it, to which could I be an instrument of persuading any, how happy should I think myself ? Howsoever it is my duty to endeavour it, and for that purpose I shall now clear up the true notion of Christianity, that we may know, not what it is to be professors and pretenders to Christianity, but what it is to be real Christians, and true dis-

ciples of Christ Jesus, such as Christ will own for his in another world.

Now to know whom Christ will accept for his disciples, our only way is to consult Christ himself, and to consider what it is that he requires of those that follow him, in order to be his disciples; a thing as easily understood, as it is generally disregarded; for nothing can be more plain, than that Christ requires and enjoins all those that would be his disciples, to observe not only some few, but all the commands that he hath laid upon us. *Ye are my friends, saith he, and therefore my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you,* John xv. 14. So that unless we do whatsoever he commands us, we are so far from being his disciples, that we are indeed his enemies. Nay, they that would be his disciples, must excel and surpass all others in virtue and good works. *Herein, saith he, is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples,* John xv. 8. yea, and continue in them too, John viii. 31. He tells us also, that they that would be his disciples, *must love him above all things,* or rather, hate all things in comparison of him, Luke xiv. 26. *And that they love one another, as he hath loved them,* John xiii. 35. To name no more; read but St. Matt. xvi. 24. and there you may see what it is to be a Christian indeed, or what it is that Christ requires of those who would be his disciples. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.* Did we but understand the true meaning of these words, and order our conversation accordingly, we should both know what it is to be true Christians, and really be so ourselves. For I think there is nothing that Christ requires of those who desire to be his disciples, but we should perform it, could we but observe what is here commanded; which that we may all do, I shall endeavour to give the true meaning of them, and of every particular in them, as they lie in order.

First, saith he, *If any man will come after me,* that is, if any man will be my disciple; for masters ye know use to go before, scholars and disciples to follow after. And our Saviour here speaks of himself under the notion of a master, that hath disciples coming after him, and saith, that if any one would be one of his disciples, so as to go after him, *he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him.* So that here are three things which our blessed Saviour requires of those that would be his disciples, and by consequence of us who profess to be so; for I dare say, there is none of us but desires to be a Christian, or at least to be thought so; for we all know and believe Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour of mankind, that

one can save us but he, and that there is none of us but he can save, and that all those who truly come to him for pardon and salvation, shall most certainly have it. Hence it is that we would all be thought at least so wise, and to have so much care of our own souls as to go after Christ, and be his disciples. I hope there are but few but who really desire to be so. But I would not have any think that it is so easy a matter to be a disciple of Christ, or a real and true Christian, as the world would make it; no, we may assure ourselves, that as it is the highest honour and happiness we can attain unto, so we shall find it the hardest matter in the world to attain unto it; not in its own nature, but by reason of its contrariety to our natural temper and inclinations. For here we see what it is that our blessed Saviour requires of those that would go after him, even nothing less than to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him. All which are far greater things than at the first sight or reading they may seem to be.

For first, saith he, *If any one will come after me, let him deny himself*; which being the first thing which Christ requires of those that go after him, it is necessary that we search more narrowly into the nature of it. For if we fail in this, we cannot but fail in all the rest. And therefore, for the opening of this, I shall not trouble the reader with the various expositions, and the divers opinions of learned men concerning these words, but only mind him in general, that the self-denial here spoken of is properly opposed to self-love, or that corrupt and vicious habit of the soul, whereby we are apt to admire and prefer our own fancies, wills, desires, interests, and the like, before Christ himself, and what he is pleased either to promise to us or require of us. And therefore, when he commands us to deny ourselves, his will and pleasure in general is this, that we do not indulge or gratify ourselves in any thing that stands in opposition against, and comes into competition with, his interest in the world, or ours in him, howsoever near and dear it may be unto us. But to deny ourselves whatsoever is pleasing to ourselves, if it be not so to God and Christ too, so as not to live to ourselves, but only unto him that died for us; to live as those who are none of our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore should glorify God both in our souls and in our bodies, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. But seeing this is not only the first lesson to be learnt by Christ's disciples, but that which is necessarily required in order to whatsoever else he commands from us, I shall show you more particularly what it is in yourselves that you are to deny.

First, you must deny your own reasons in matters of divine

revelation, so as to use them no farther than only to search into the grounds and motives that we have to believe them to be revealed by God. For this being either proved or supposed, we are not to suffer our reasons to be too curious in searching into them, but believe them upon the word and testimony of God himself, who is the supreme truth, or verity itself.

For we who by all our art and cunning cannot understand the reasons of the most common and obvious things in nature must not think to comprehend the great mysteries of the Gospel, which though they be not contrary to our reasons, are infinitely above them. For *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned* 1 Cor. ii. 14. So that to the understanding of the things of the Spirit, or which the Spirit of God hath revealed to us, there is a great deal more required than what we have by nature even the supernatural assistance of the Spirit himself that revealed them. And therefore *if any man amongst us seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. that is, he that would be wise unto salvation, must look upon himself as a fool, as one incapable by nature of understanding the things that belong unto his everlasting peace, without both the revelation and assistance of God himself, and therefore must not rely upon his own judgment, but only upon God's testimony in what he doth believe not believing what his reason, but what God's word tells him looking upon it as reason enough why he should believe it, because God hath said it.

I know this is an hard doctrine to flesh and blood. For, as Job tells us, *Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt*, Job xi. 12. Though by nature we be never so foolish, vain, and ignorant, understanding the great mysteries of the Gospel no more than a *wild ass's colt* doth a mathematical demonstration, yet howsoever we would fain be thought very wise men, yea so wise as to be able to comprehend matters of the highest, yea of an infinite nature, within the narrow compass of our finite and shallow capacities. But this is that which we must deny ourselves in, if we desire to be Christ's disciples, so as to acquiesce in his word, and believe what he asserts, only because he asserts it, without suffering our reason to interpose, but looking upon his word as more than all the reasons and arguments in the world besides.

Secondly, You must deny your own wills. Our wills, it is true, at first were made upright and perfect, every way correspondent to the will of God himself; so as to will what he wills,

that is what is really good, and to nill what he nills, that is what is really evil. But being now perverted, and corrupt with sin, our wills are naturally inclined to the evil which they should be averse from, and averse from the good which they should be inclined to. So that instead of choosing the good and refusing the evil, we are generally apt to choose the evil and refuse the good; yet for all that our wills are thus crooked and perverse, we cannot endure to have them crossed or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own wills in every thing, so as neither to do any thing ourselves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but just as ourselves will, who will usually just contrary to what we should. But now they that would be Christ's disciples, must not be thus self-willed, but deny themselves the fulfilling of their own wills, when it doth not consist with the will of God to have them fulfilled. This our Lord and Master hath taught us by his example as well as precept, saying, *Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done*, Luke xxii. 42. Where we may observe, that our blessed Saviour, as man, could not but have a natural averseness from death, as all men by nature have, and that without sin. Yet though Christ's will, as man, was never so pure and perfect, yet he wholly submits it to the will of God. He manifested indeed that it was the will of that nature which he had assumed not to suffer death, saying, *if it be possible let this cup pass from me*; but he shews withal that the will of man must still be subject to the will of God; and that man, even as man, must deny his own will, whensoever it runneth not exactly parallel with God's, saying, *nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done*.

And if Christ himself denied his own most pure and perfect will, that his Father's might be accomplished, how much more cause have we to deny our wills, which by nature are always contrary to his will, yea and to our own good too, preferring generally that which is evil and destructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us? And verily a great part of true Christianity consisteth in thus resigning our wills to God's, not minding so much which way our own inclinations bend, as what his pleasure and command is. A notable instance whereof we have in old Eli, who questionless could not but be very willing that the iniquity of his sons might be forgiven, and his family prosper in the world; yet howsoever, when God had manifested his pleasure to him that his house should be destroyed, he submitted his own will wholly unto God's, saying, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And whosoever of us would be Christ's

disciple indeed, must be sure thus to deny and renounce his own will, whensoever it appears to be contrary unto God's, so as even to will, that not his own will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and Master himself hath taught us each day to pray, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* And whosoever hath learned this art of making his own will bow and stoop to God's, hath made a very good progress in the Christian religion, especially in that part of it which requires us to deny ourselves.

And seeing we must deny our wills, we must needs deny our affections too, which are indeed nothing else but the several motions of the will towards good and evil, but usually they are so disorderly and irregular, as to place themselves upon objects directly opposite to what they were designed for; for that we ordinarily love what we ought to hate, and hate what we ought to love; desire what we ought to abhor, and abhor what we ought to desire; rejoice in those things which we ought to grieve for, and are grieved at such things as we ought to rejoice in. So that if we suffer our affections to move according to their natural tendency and corrupt inclinations, we shall be so far from going after Christ, that we shall continually be running from him. And therefore it must be our great care and study to bridle our affections, deny them their unlawful, and fix them upon their proper objects; yea, and to deny ourselves too the lawful use of such things as our affections are apt to be unlawfully placed upon. As for example: it is lawful, yea our duty, to love our relations; but if our love to them becomes exorbitant, so as to love them more than God, our love to them must be turned into hatred in comparison of our love to him, Luke xiv. 26. And whatsoever lawful thing it is that we take pleasure in, if once we find that our pleasure in that extinguisheth, or but damps that pleasure which we used or ought to have in God, we are to deny ourselves such pleasures as these are, and rather despise ourselves than God.

Yea, we must deny ourselves moreover the use and enjoyment of our estates and earthly possessions, whensoever they come in competition with his glory. So that if it comes to that point, that we must either leave our estates to enjoy Christ, or leave Christ to enjoy our estates, we must be willing and ready, without any more ado, to abandon and renounce whatsoever else we have, rather than our interest in Christ. For indeed he is not worthy to be Christ's disciple that doth not prefer him before all things else; neither he that loves the world at all in comparison of Christ: *For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,* 1 John ii. 15. And therefore he

that would be Christ's disciple indeed, must fix his heart so fast on Christ, that it hang loose and indifferent as to all things here below, being no more proud of them, no more delighted in them, no more concerned about them, than as if he had them not. So that though he have all things besides Christ, he must have nothing but him, or at least in comparison of him ; yea, be ready to part with all that he may gain Christ. And though many of us may think this an hard saying, we may assure ourselves, it is no more than what we must do, if we desire to be Christ's disciples, Luke xiv. 33.

Furthermore, we must deny ourselves those sins especially, and lusts which we have or do still indulge ourselves in : for thus the Gospel teacheth you in a particular manner, *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, Tit. ii. 12. And therefore we in vain pretend to be true Christians, so long as we live in any one known sin with any love unto it, or delight in it. I suppose none of my readers guilty of all sins, and I fear there are few but live in some. No man but may be naturally averse from some sins, but it is very rare to find one that is inclined to none ; for ordinarily every man hath his darling, his beloved sin, his own sin, as David himself once had, though he afterwards kept himself from it, Psal, xviii. 23. So I fear none of my readers but have some sin, which he may in a peculiar manner call his own, as being that which his thoughts run most upon, and his desires are carried most unto, which he labours most after, and takes most pleasure in, which he is most loth to be reprov'd for, and most easily overcome by. Now this and whatsoever other sins any of us are addicted to, we must wholly leave, and utterly renounce, if ever we desire to be Christ's disciples. And therefore so long as any of us live in any known sin, as in pride or prodigality, in oppression or covetousness, in malice or uncleanness, in drunkenness, uncharitableness, or any other sin whatsoever, we must not think ourselves to be Christians indeed, Christ will never own us for his disciples ; for so long as we live in any known sin, it is that sin, not Christ, that is our master ; and therefore if we would list ourselves into his service, we must be sure to deny ourselves whatsoever we know to be offensive to him.

There is still another thing behind wherein we must deny ourselves, if we desire to go after Christ ; and that is, we must deny and renounce all our self-righteousness, and all hopes and confidences from ourselves, and from what we have done, which I look upon as a very great piece of self-denial, for naturally we are all prone to sacrifice to our own nets, to burn incense to our own drags, to boast of our own good works,

and to pride ourselves with the conceit of our own righteousness. Though we be never so sinful, we would not be thought to be so, but would very fain be accounted righteous, not only by men, but by God himself, for something or other which ourselves do, though when all comes to all, we know not what that should be; but howsoever the pride of our hearts is such, that we are loth to go out of ourselves to look for righteousness, or to be beholden to another for it. And this is the reason that justification by faith in Christ hath had so many adversaries in the world; mankind in general being so much in love with themselves, and doting upon what themselves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilify their own obedience and good works, so much as to think that they stand in need of any other righteousness besides their own; as if their own righteousness was so perfect, that God himself could find no fault with it, nor make any exceptions against it, but must needs acknowledge them to be just and righteous persons for it.

Whereas, alas! there is not the best action that ever a mere mortal did, but if examined by the strict rules of justice, it is far from being good, yea, so far, that God himself may justly pronounce it evil, and by consequence condemn the person that did it, for doing of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder what it is that any man doth or can do, for which he can in reason expect to be justified before God, our very righteousness being as the prophet tells, *but as filthy rags*, and our most holy performances fraught with sin and imperfection, and therefore so far from justifying us, that we may justly be condemned for them; but this mankind doth not love to hear of, the pride of our hearts being such, that by all means we must have something in ourselves whereof to glory before God himself. But woe be to that person who hath no other righteousness but his own, wherein to appear before the judge of the whole world. For howsoever specious his actions may seem to men, they will be adjudged sins before the eternal God.

He therefore that would come to Christ, although he must labour after righteousness to the utmost of his power, yet when he hath done all, he must renounce it, and look upon himself as an unprofitable servant; for *Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 13. that is, he came not to call such persons as think they have righteousness enough of their own to serve their turns, for such persons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them; but he calls sinners, that is, such as may perhaps be as righteous as the other, but they do not think themselves to be so, but look upon themselves as undone for

ever, unless they have something else to trust to than their own good works and obedience to the moral law. Such persons therefore Christ came to call, and if they come to him, they cannot but find rest and righteousness in him; and if any of us desire to go after Christ, so as to be his disciples, we must be sure to look upon ourselves as sinners, as deserving nothing but wrath and vengeance for whatsoever we have done; we must renounce all our own righteousness, and be so far from depending upon it, as to think that we have none to depend upon, for so really we have not. And when we have laid aside all thoughts of our own righteousness, as to the matter of our justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified to embrace another's, even that righteousness which is by faith in Christ. Thus St. Paul, though he had as much, yea, more reason to trust in the flesh or in himself than others; for himself saith, *that as touching the righteousness which is of the law, he was blameless*, Phil. iii. 6. yet, saith he, *what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*, ver. 7, 8, 9. Thus therefore it is that all those must do, who desire to be, as St. Paul was, real disciples of Jesus Christ, as we must forsake our sins, so we must renounce our righteousness too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of self-denial, thus to deny ourselves all that pride, pleasure, and confidence, which we used to take in the thoughts of our own righteousness and obedience to the law of God. But we must remember, that the first thing which our Saviour enjoins those that come after him, is to deny themselves.

Thus I have shown what it is in ourselves that we must deny, and how it is that we must deny ourselves, if we desire to go after Christ; we must deny ourselves the curiosity of searching too much into the mysteries of the Gospel, by the light of our own clouded reasons; we must deny our self-conceit, our self-will, our self-love, self-interests, self-confidence, and whatsoever proceeds from and terminates in our sensual and sinful selves, so as to have no delight in nor dependence upon ourselves; yea, we must so deny ourselves, as to be quite taken off of our former selves, and become other creatures than what before we were. Thus St. Ambrose explains these words,

saying, *Seipsum sibi homo abneget et totus mutetur* ; *Let a man deny himself to himself, so as to be wholly changed from what he was.* But then you will say, what need is there of all this trouble, what reason can be given that a man must deny himself before he can be a true Christian ?

To that I answer, it is reason enough that Christ hath commanded us to do it, and surely he best knows whom he will accept of as his disciples, and what is necessary to be done in order to our being so. And he hath said in plain terms, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself* ; implying, that he that doth not deny himself, cannot go after him.

But besides that, there is an impossibility in the thing itself, that any one should be a true Christian, or go after Christ, and not deny himself, as may be easily perceived, if they will but consider what true Christianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real Christian. A true Christian we know is one that lives by faith, and not by sight, that *looks not at the things which are seen, but at those things which are not seen*, that believes whatsoever Christ hath said, trusteth on whatsoever he hath promised, and obeyeth whatsoever he hath commanded ; that receiveth Christ as his only Priest to make atonement for him, as his only Prophet to instruct, and as his only Lord and Master to rule and govern him. In a word, a Christian, is one that gives up himself and all he hath to Christ, who gave himself and all he hath to him ; and therefore the very notion of true Christianity implies and supposes the denial of ourselves, without which it is as impossible for a man to be a Christian, as it is for a subject to be rebellious and loyal to his prince at the same time ; and therefore it is absolutely necessary that we go out of ourselves before we can go to him ; we must strip ourselves of our very selves before we can put on Christ ; for Christ himself hath told us, that *no man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other*, Matt. vi. 24. We cannot serve both *God and Mammon*, Christ and ourselves too ; so that we must either deny ourselves to go after Christ, or else deny Christ to go after ourselves, so as to mind our own selfish ends and designs in the world.

Wherefore I hope I need not use any other arguments to persuade any to deny themselves in the sense already explained ; I dare say there is none amongst us but would willingly be what we profess, even a real Christian, and so go after Christ here, as to come to him hereafter. But we have now seen how Christ himself hath told us, that *we must deny ourselves*, if we desire to serve and enjoy him. And verily it is an hard

case if we cannot deny ourselves for him, who so far denied himself for us, as to lay down his own life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himself, yea, who himself was the true God, so far denied himself, as to become man, yea, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs*, for us; and cannot we deny ourselves so much as a fancy, a conceit, a sin or lust, for him? how then can we expect that he should own us for his friends, his servants or disciples? No, he will never do it, neither can we in reason expect that he should give himself and all the merits of his death and passion unto us, so long as we think much to give ourselves to him, or to deny ourselves for him. And therefore if we desire to be made partakers of all those glorious things that he hath purchased with his own most precious blood for the sons of men; let us begin here, indulge our flesh no longer, but deny ourselves whatsoever God hath been pleased to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour each day more and more to live above ourselves, above the temper of our bodies, and above the allurements of the world, live as those who believe and profess that they are none of their own, but Christ's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preservation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath purchased and redeemed us with his own blood. And therefore let us deny ourselves for the future to our very selves, whose we are not, and devote ourselves to him whose alone we are; by this we shall manifest ourselves to be Christ's disciples indeed, especially if we do not only deny ourselves, but also take up our cross and follow him; which brings me to the second thing which our blessed Saviour here requires of those who would go after him, even *to take up their cross*.

Where, by the cross, we are to understand whatsoever troubles or calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the performance of our duty to God or man, which they that would go after Christ must take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor sinking under them; for we must not think that Christ invites us to an earthly paradise of idleness and outward pleasures, as if we had nothing to do or to suffer for him. For even as men, we cannot but find many crosses in the world, but as Christians we must expect more; for Christ himself hath told us, that in the world we shall have tribulation, John xvi. 33. And therefore whatsoever we meet with, is no more than what we are to look for; especially if we walk uprightly in the way that leads to heaven, we cannot but expect to meet with many a rub; for God himself hath told us, that it is *through many tribulations that*

we must *enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Acts xiv. 22. And therefore we must not think to be carried up to heaven with the breath of popular applause, nor to swim through a deluge of carnal pleasures into the haven of everlasting happiness. No, we must look to be tossed to and fro in this world, as in a raging and tempestuous ocean, and never look for perpetual calmness and tranquillity, until we are got above the clouds, yea, even above the sun and stars themselves. This world was always a world of trouble, and ever will be; its very friends, and they that have their portion here, can find no quiet nor satisfaction in it; but the disciples of Christ *they are not of this world*, as Christ himself tells us, John xvii. 36. and therefore no wonder if the world frowns more upon them than others. The way they walk in is opposite to the world, it is enmity itself to the flesh, and therefore no wonder if they meet with so much enmity and opposition here; the way wherein they go after Christ is a cross way, it is cross to sin, cross to satan, cross to the world, cross to our very selves as we are by nature, and by consequence cross to all men in the world but Christ's disciples, and therefore it is no wonder they meet with so many crosses in it. But howsoever, if we desire to go after Christ, he hath told us beforehand what we must expect, as he hath borne the cross before us, he expects that we now bear it after him; yea, we must not only bear it, but take it up too: not that we should run ourselves into danger, but that we should balk no duty to avoid it, so as to be willing and ready to undergo the greatest suffering, rather than to commit the least sin, and to run the greatest danger rather than neglect the smallest duty. If whilst we are walking in the narrow path of holiness, there happens to lie a cross in the way, we must not go on one side nor on the other side of it out of the path we walk in, neither must we kick and spurn at it, but we must patiently take it up and carry it along with us; if it be a little heavy at first, it will soon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our progress towards heaven.

But here we must have a great care to understand our Saviour's meaning, and so our own duty aright; for we must not think that every trouble we meet with in the world is the cross of Christ, for we may suffer for our fancy or humour, or perhaps for our sin and transgression of the laws of God or men, and if so, it is our own cross, not Christ's, which we take upon us; we may thank ourselves for it, I am sure Christ hath no cause to thank us: *For this is thankworthy*, saith the apostle, *if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully*, 1 Peter ii. 19, 20. And therefore the duty which

our Saviour here imposeth on us, in few terms, is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to suffer what we can for the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel, and that we omit no duty, nor commit any sin for fear of suffering; not to think much of any trouble that befalls us for Christ's sake, but rather to rejoice at it, even as the apostles rejoiced, that *they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name*, Acts v. 41. Which was a clear instance of their performing the duty here enjoined both them and us, under the name of *taking up our cross*.

And I hope there is none of us can take it ill that Christ hath imposed so severe a duty upon us; for we may assure ourselves he requires no more of us than what himself hath undergone before, so that we can suffer nothing for him, but what he hath suffered before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our hearts? so had he, Matt. xxvi. 38. Have we pains and tortures in our bodies? so had he, Matt. xxvii. 29, 30. Are we derided and scoffed at? so was he, Matt. xxvii. 31. Are we arraigned or condemned, yea, do we suffer death itself? it is no more than what our Lord and Master hath done before. And let us remember what he told us when he was upon the earth, *the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord*, Matt. x. 24. If we be Christ's disciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the world than Christ himself did, neither indeed can we fare so bad; for it is impossible that we should undergo so much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the sufferings of men, his the sufferings of one who was God as well as man; whereby sufferings in general are sanctified to our human nature, it having already undergone them in the person of the Son of God, so that it can be now no disparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea death itself, or any other calamity whatsoever in this world, seeing the Son of God himself, he that made the world, underwent the same while himself was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to stoop down and take up the cross of Christ, as considering that Christ having borne it before us, hath so blessed and sanctified it unto us, that it is now become an honourable, an advantageous, yea and a pleasant cross, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully, and constantly as they ought to do, especially seeing it is such a cross as leads unto a crown; and whatsoever we can do or suffer for Christ here, will be fully recompensed with glory hereafter; and therefore instead of being troubled to take up our cross, we are rather to rejoice that we have any to take up,

Thus we see in few words what it is which our Saviour commands from us, when he enjoins us to deny ourselves, and take up our cross, even that we do not gratify ourselves in any thing that is ungrateful unto him, nor grudge to take up any cross, or suffer any trouble we meet with in the world for his sake, thinking nothing too dear to forsake, nor any thing too heavy to bear for him, who thought not his own life too dear, nor the cross itself too heavy to bear for us; what now remains, but that knowing our Saviour's pleasure, we should all resolve to do it. There is none of us but hope and desire to be saved by him, but that we can never be, unless we observe what he hath prescribed in order to our salvation: and amongst other things, we see how he hath commanded us to deny ourselves, and take up our cross; as any of us therefore desires to be Christians indeed, so as to see Christ's face with comfort in another world, let us bethink ourselves seriously what sins we have hitherto indulged ourselves in; I fear there are but few, if any, amongst us, but are conscious to themselves, that they have and do still live either in the constant neglect of some known duty, or else in the frequent commission of some beloved sin; what that is, I dare not undertake to tell, but leave that to God and to men's own consciences; only I desire them to deal faithfully with their own souls, and not suffer themselves to be fooled into a fond and vain persuasion that they have an interest in Christ, or are truly his disciples, until they deny themselves that sin, whatsoever it is, which they have hitherto indulged themselves in. And let us not think that we shall deny ourselves any real pleasure or profit, by renouncing our sins; for what pleasure can we have in displeasing God, or profit in losing our own souls? No, we shall gratify ourselves more than we can imagine, by denying ourselves, as much as we are able, whatsoever is offensive or displeasing unto God; for we may be sure, he that came into the world on purpose to save us from evil, commands us nothing but for our own good, neither would he ever have obliged us to deny ourselves, if we could have been saved without it; and as for the cross, that he was so well acquainted with, that he would never have imposed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indispensably necessary for us. And therefore if we be what we pretend, real and true Christians, let us manifest it to the world and to our own consciences, by denying ourselves whatsoever Christ hath denied us, and by observing whatsoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any cross, that he for his own sake shall suffer to be laid

upon us, still remembering, that self-denial, though it be unpleasant, is a most necessary duty; and the cross, though it be never so heavy, it is but short, and hath nothing less than a crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who deny themselves.

THOUGHTS

UPON

STRIVING TO ENTER AT THE STRAIT GATE.

As certainly as we are here now, it is not long but we shall all be in another world, either in a world of happiness, or else in a world of misery; or if you will, either in heaven or in hell. For these are the two only places which all mankind, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, must live in for evermore; some in the one, some in the other, according to their carriage and behaviour here; and therefore it is worth the while to take a view and prospect now and then of both these places, and it will not be amiss if we do it now; for which end, I desire the reader in his serious and composed thoughts to attend me first into the celestial mansions, above yonder glorious sun and the stars themselves, where not only the cherubins and serephins, angels and archangels, but many also of our brethren, the sons of men, at this very moment are enjoying the presence and singing forth the praises of the most high God. There are the spirits of just men made perfect, perfect in themselves, and perfect in all their actions, perfectly free from all both sin and misery, perfectly full of all true grace and glory, all their faculties being reduced to that most perfect and excellent frame and constitution, that their understandings are continually taken up with the contemplations of the supreme truth, and their wills in the embracement of the chiefest good; so that all the inclinations of their souls rest in God as their proper centre, in whom by consequence they enjoy as much as they can desire, yea, as much as they can be made capable of desiring. For all those infinite perfections that are centered in God himself, are now in their possession, to solace and delight themselves in the full and perfect enjoyment of them; by which means they are as happy as God himself can make them, insomuch that at this very moment methinks we may all behold them so ravished, so trans-

ported with their celestial joys, that it may justly strike us into admiration, how creatures, which once were sinful, could ever be made so pure, so perfect, and altogether so happy as they are. And could we but leave our bodies for a while below, and go up to take a turn in the New Jerusalem that is above, we could not but be ravished and transported at the very sight both of the place and inhabitants, every one being far more glorious than the greatest emperors of this world, with nothing less than crowns of glory on their heads, and sceptres of righteousness in their hands, where they think of nothing but praising him, do nothing but adore and worship him; in a word, whatsoever is agreeable to our natures, whatsoever is desirable to our souls, whatsoever can any way conduce to make men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed, by all and every person that is in heaven. Whereas on the other side, if we bring down our thoughts from heaven, and send them as low as hell, to consider the most deplorable estate and condition of those who inhabit the regions of darkness, then we shall find as miserable as the other are happy; not only in that they are deprived of the vision and fruition of the chiefest good, but likewise in that they are in continual pain and torment, as great as infinite justice can adjudge them to, and infinite power inflict upon them; insomuch, that could we lay our ear to the entrance of that bottomless pit, what howlings and shriekings should we hear, what weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the midst of those infernal flames, where, as our Saviour himself tells us, *the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark ix. 44. that is, where their consciences are always gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former sins, and the fire of God's wrath is continually burning in them, never to be quenched or abated. For certainly, as the smiles and favour of the eternal God constitute the joys of heaven, so do his frowns and anger make up the flames of hell. To see him that made us displeased with us, to see mercy itself to frown upon us, to see the great and all-glorious Creator of the world, the chiefest good, to look angrily upon us, and to mean himself offended at us, and incensed against us! Methinks the very thoughts of it are sufficient to make the stoutest heart amongst us tremble: but then what shall we think of those poor souls that see and feel it? what shall we think of them? Questionless they are more miserable than we are able to think them to be. For we cannot possibly conceive either the greatness of heaven's glory, or the sharpness of hell's torments; only this we know, and may be certain of, that whatsoever is ungrateful to their minds, whatsoever is troublesome

to their thoughts, whatsoever is contrary to their desires, whatsoever is painful to their bodies, or whatsoever is or can be destructive and tormenting to their souls, that all they who are once in hell, shall fear and feel, and that for ever.

But this is too sad and doleful a subject to insist on long, neither should I have mentioned it, but for our own good, and to prepare us the better, both for the understanding and improving the advice of our Saviour, Matt. vii. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the strait gate, &c.* The meaning of which words, in brief, may be reduced to these three heads.

First, That it is an easy matter to go to hell, that place of torments we have now been describing, and by consequence that many go thither; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leadeth thereto.

Secondly, That it is an hard and difficult thing to get to heaven, that place of joys we before spake of, and by consequence that but few get thither; *For strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to it.*

Lastly, Howsoever difficult it is, our Saviour would have us strive to get to heaven, so as to press through that strait gate, and walk in that narrow way that leadeth into life.

As for the first, that the gate is wide, and the way broad, that leads to hell, or that it is an easy matter to go thither, I need not use many words to prove it. For though there be but few that mind it; I dare say there is scarce any one but believes it, yea and hath often times found it to be true by experience, even that it is an easy matter to sin, and that, we know, is the broad way that leads to hell; so broad, that they that walk in it can find no bounds nor limits in it, wherewithin to contain themselves; neither are they ever out of their way, but go which way they will, they are still in the ready way to ruin and destruction. And usually it is as plain as broad, so that men rarely meet with any roughness or trouble in it, but rather with all the pleasures and delights which they desire, who look no higher than to please the flesh; yea, whatsoever it is that they naturally desire, they still meet with it in the road to hell; and whatsoever is ungrateful and irksome to them, they are never troubled with it in the ways of sin. There are no crosses to be taken up, no self to be denied, but rather indulged and gratified; there are no such tedious and troublesome things as examining our hearts, and mortifying our lusts, as praying or hearing, as fasting or watching: these are only to be found in the narrow path that leads to heaven, the broad way to hell is altogether unacquainted with them, being strewed all along with carnal pleasures and sensual delights, with

popular applause, and earthly riches, and such fine things as silly mortals use to be taken with.

And hence it is, that, as our Saviour tells us, many there be which find this way, and go in at this wide gate that leads to ruin, because they see not whither it leads, but they see the baits and allurements which are in it, which they cannot but crowd about as fishes about a hook, or as flies about a candle, till they be destroyed. Yea, this way to destruction is so broad, that almost all the world is continually walking in it; the gate so wide that thousands at a time pass through it. And therefore we may well conclude, it is an easy thing to go to that place of torments which even now we spake of, or rather that it is an hard, a difficult matter to keep out of it; the way being so narrow that carries from it, that it is a difficult thing to find it; and the way so broad that leads unto it, that none can miss of it that hath but a mind to walk in it.

But I hope none of my readers have so, God forbid they should have a mind to go to hell; their taking religious books into their hands is rather an argument that they have a mind to go to heaven, and read on purpose to learn the way thither. And we do well to take all opportunities of finding out the way to bliss; for we may assure ourselves it is a very narrow one, it is hard to find it out, but much more hard to walk in it; for it is a way very rarely trodden, so that there is scarce any path to be seen, most people going either on one side, or else on the other side of it; some running into the bye-paths of error, heresy, or schism; others into the broad way of profaneness or security: insomuch that there are but very few that hit upon the right path that leads directly to the New Jerusalem, the place of rest. I speak not this of myself; no, Christ himself, that came from heaven to earth, on purpose to shew us the way from earth to heaven, saith, that *strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

And let not any think that Christ spoke these words in vain, or that it is no great matter whether we believe what he said or no. For questionless, one great reason why so few ever come to heaven is, because most think it so easy to get thither that they need not take any care or pains about it. For even amongst ourselves, to whom the Gospel is so clearly revealed, men generally think if they do but read the Scriptures, and hear sermons, and live honestly with their neighbours, so as to harm nobody, but pay every one their own, then they shall as surely come to heaven, as if they were there already; nay, many are so simple as to think that their separation from the church mili-

tant on earth is the way to bring them to the church triumphant in heaven ; and others so ridiculous as to believe that a death-bed repentance is sufficient to entitle them to eternal life. But stay a while : it is not so easy a matter to get to heaven. Indeed to me it seems one of the greatest mysteries in the world, that ever any man or woman should come thither, that such sinful worms as we are, who are born in sin, and live so long in sin and rebellion against the great Creator of the world, should ever be received so far into his grace and favour, as to enjoy life and eternal happiness in him. And did we look no farther than ourselves, we might justly despair of ever obtaining so transcendent glory which we are so altogether unworthy of. But the goodness of God both is and hath been so great to mankind, that there is none of us but in and through the merits of Christ Jesus, is in a capacity of it. But we must not think that it is so easy a thing to come to heaven, as the devil, the world, and our own base hearts, would persuade us it is : if we do, we are never likely to come thither ; no, we may assure ourselves, as heaven is the greatest good that we can attain, so doth it require our greatest care and study imaginable to attain it.

This therefore is that which I shall endeavour to convince men of, and account myself happy if I can do it. For, I dare say, there is none of us but desire to see Christ in glory, and to be happy with him and in him for ever ; but that we can never be, unless we do whatsoever is required of us in order to it ; and if we think it so easy a matter to do whatsoever is required of us, I have just cause to suspect that we never yet made trial of it, nor set ourselves seriously upon the performance of those duties which are enjoined us here in reference to our being happy forever. For if we have set upon it in good earnest, we cannot but have found it very hard and difficult, by reason of our natural averseness from what is good, and inclinations unto evil. For, we all know, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. So that holiness is the way, the direct and only way that leads to heaven ; neither is there any way imaginable of being happy hereafter but by being holy here. And though it be an easy thing to profess holiness, and to perform some external acts of it ; yet to be truly pious and holy indeed, so as we must be if ever we would go to heaven, this is every whit as difficult as the other is easy.

For first, I suppose, all will grant that he is not truly holy that lives in any known sin, as the Apostle also intimates, saying, he that *is born of God doth not commit sin*, 1 John iii. 9. And therefore he that still indulgeth himself in the commission of

any known sin, he is not yet regenerate or born of God, he is not truly holy. So that to our being so holy here, as that we may be happy hereafter, it is absolutely and indispensably necessary that we forsake and avoid to the utmost of our power whatsoever is offensive unto God, and contrary to his laws. But it is as difficult as it is necessary to forsake sin as we ought to do. It is an easy matter, I confess, to rail at sin, to backbite others, or blame ourselves for it. But that is not the business; but to loath our sins as much as ever we loved them, to abhor as much as ever we desired them, and to be as much averse from them as ever we were inclined to them, to forsake sin as sin, and by consequence all sin whatsoever, one as well as another, so as to deny ourselves all that pleasure we were wont to take in any sin, and all that seeming profit which we used to receive by it, and that too out of love to God and fear of his displeasure: this is to forsake sin indeed, but it is sooner spoken of than done; and it requires a great deal of time, and skill, and pains to get so great a conquest over ourselves as this is, to cut off our right hand, pluck out our right eye, and cast it from us; even renounce and forsake those very beloved and darling sins, which the temper and constitution of our bodies, the corruption of our hearts, and constant custom and practice hath made in a manner natural to us. So that our very natures must be changed, before we can ever leave them. And therefore it must needs be a matter of as great difficulty as it is of moment, to master and subdue those sins and lusts that have been long predominant in us, which I dare say many of us have found by their own sad and woeful experience, having struggled perhaps many years against some corruption, and yet to this day have not got it under, nor totally subdued it. And it is such, and such alone, who are competent judges in this case; for they that never strove against their sins, cannot know how strong they are, nor how hard it is to conquer them. And therefore it is to those who have made it their business to destroy and mortify their lusts that I appeal, whether it be not hard to do it. I am confident they cannot but have found it, and therefore must needs acknowledge it to be so; and by consequence, that it is no easy matter to get to heaven, seeing it is so hard to keep out of hell, and to avoid those sins which otherwise will certainly bring us thither; every sin unrepented of having eternal punishment entailed upon it.

And if it be so hard to forsake sin, how difficult must it needs be to perform all those duties, and to exert all those graces which are necessarily required, in order to our attaining everlasting happiness. It is true, praying and hearing,

which are the ordinary means for the obtaining true grace and holiness, are duties very common and customary amongst us, but they are never the easier because they are common, but rather far more difficult. For we being accustomed to a careless and perfunctory performing these duties, cannot but find it an hard and difficult matter to keep our hearts so close unto them, as to perform them as we ought to do, and so as that we may be really said to do them. For we must not think that sitting at church while the word of God is preached, is hearing the word of God, or that being present there whilst prayers are read, is real praying. No, no, there is a great deal more required than this to our praying to the great God aright; insomuch that for mine own part, I really think that prayer, as it is the highest, so is it the hardest duty that we can be engaged in. All the faculties of our souls, as well as members of our bodies, being obliged to put forth themselves in their several capacities to the due performance of it.

And as for those several graces and virtues which our souls must be adorned withal, before ever they can come to heaven, though it be easy to talk of them, it is not so to act them. I shall instance only in some few; as to love God above all things, and other things only for God's sake, to hope on nothing but God's promises, and to fear nothing but his displeasure; to love other men's persons, so as to hate their vices, and so to hate their vices as still to love their persons; not to covet riches when we have them not, nor trust on them when we have them; to deny ourselves that we may please God, and to take up our cross that we may follow Christ; to live above the world whilst we are in it, and to despise it whilst we use it; to be always upon our watch and guard, strictly observing not only the outward actions of our life, but the inward motions of our hearts; to hate those very sins which we used to love, and to love those very duties which we used to hate; to choose the greatest affliction before the least sin, and to neglect the getting of the greatest gain, rather than the performing of the smallest duty; to believe truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the testimony of one whom we never saw; to submit our wills to God's, and delight ourselves in obeying him; to be patient under sufferings, and thankful for all the troubles we meet with here below; to be ready and willing to do and suffer any thing we can for him, who hath done and suffered so much for us; to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the indigent, and rescue the oppressed to the utmost of our power; in a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient to Christ, as loyal to our prince, as faithful to our

friends, as loving to our enemies, as charitable to the poor, as just in our dealings, as eminent in all true grace and virtue, as if we were to be saved by it, and yet by no confidence in it, but still look upon ourselves as unprofitable servants, and depend upon Christ, and Christ alone, for pardon and salvation.

I suppose I need not tell any one that it is hard and difficult to perform such duties, and to act such graces, as these are ; but this let me tell the reader, that how hard, how difficult soever it is, it must be done if ever we design to come to heaven, and by consequence it is no easy matter to come thither. Seeing therefore the way that leads to heaven is thus narrow, and hard, it is no wonder that there are but few that walk in it, or indeed that find it out, as our Saviour himself assures us ; for people generally love to swim with the stream, to run with the multitude, though it be into the gulph of sin and misery. It is very rare to find one walking in the narrow way, and keeping himself within those bounds and limits wherewith it is inclosed ; and this seems to have been the occasion of these words in the Gospel of St. Luke, where one said unto Christ, *Lord, are there few that be saved?* and our Saviour answered in these words, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate. For many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,* Luke xiii. 23, 24. Intimating not only that there are but few that shall be saved, but likewise that many of those that seek to be saved shall not attain it ; not as if any of those who really and cordially made it their business to look after heaven, can ever miss of it ; but that many of those who presuming upon their seeming obedience and good works, shall think and seek that way to enter into the kingdom of God, *shall not be able. For many will say unto me at that day, saith he, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity,* Matt. vii. 22, 23. And if many of those who are great professors of religion, and make a plausible shew of piety in the world, shall notwithstanding come short of eternal happiness, and if of those *many which are called there are but few chosen,* Matt. xx. 16. we may well conclude there are but few, but very few indeed, that walk in the narrow path that leads to life, in comparison of those innumerable multitudes that continually flock together in the broad way that leads to ruin and destruction. One great reason whereof is, because men generally, though they desire to go to heaven, yet will not believe it to be so hard a thing as really it is to get thither ; and therefore setting aside the superficial performance of some few

external duties, they give themselves no trouble, nor take any pains about it ; as if heaven was so contemptible a thing, that it is not worth their while to look after it ; or howsoever, as if it was so easy a thing to attain it, that they cannot miss of it whether they look after it or no. Whereas questionless, as heaven is the greatest happiness that we are capable of, so is it the hardest matter in the world for any of us to attain it.

I say not this to discourage any one, but rather to excite and encourage all to a greater care and diligence in the prosecution of eternal happiness, than ordinarily men seem to have. It is my hearty desire and prayer that every soul among us may live and be happy for ever ; but that we can never be, unless we be serious, earnest, and constant in looking after it, more than after all things in the world besides. And therefore it is that I have endeavoured to convince men that it is not so easy a thing as they seem to make it to go to heaven, the path being so exceeding narrow that leads unto it : which I hope by this time we are all persuaded of, so as to be resolved within ourselves to play no longer with religion, but to set upon it in good earnest, so as to make it not only our great but our only business and design in this world, to prepare for another, and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and by consequence to walk in that narrow way of true piety and virtue that leads to heaven, without going aside into the vices on either hand, or howsoever to use the utmost of our endeavours to observe the rules which Christ hath prescribed us, in order to our living with him for ever. And oh that I knew what words to take unto myself, and what arguments to use, whereby to prevail with every soul of us, to make it our business to get to heaven ; and by consequence to walk directly in the narrow way, and through the strait gate that leads unto it. What influence or effect they may have upon the readers, I know not ; howsoever I shall endeavour to present them with some such considerations, as I hope by the blessing of God, and the assistance of his grace, may be so forcible and prevalent upon them, if seriously weighed, that they should not methinks be able to resist them.

Let us consider therefore in the first place, that though it be never so hard to get to heaven, yet it is possible ; and though there be but few that come thither, yet there are some ; and why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others ? There are many perfect and most glorious saints in heaven at this moment, which once were sinful creatures upon earth as we now are ; but it seems the way thither was not so narrow but they could walk in it, nor the gate so strait but they

could pass through it ; and why may not we as well as they ? We have the same natures whereby we are capable of happiness as they had ; we have the same Scriptures to direct us to it as they had ; we have the same promises of assistance as they had ; we have the same Saviour as they had ; and why then may not we get to the same place where they are ? Is the way more narrow and the gate more strait to us than it was to them ? No, surely, it is every way the same ; why then should we despair of ever attaining everlasting glory, seeing we are as capable of it as any one who hath yet attained it. It is true, if no mortal men had ever got to heaven, or God had said none should ever come thither, then indeed it would be in vain for us to expect it, or to use any means to attain unto it : but seeing many of our brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the straitness of the gate, the narrowness of the way, or the difficulty of getting thither, should never discourage us from endeavouring after it, no more than it did them, but rather make us the more diligent in the prosecution of it : especially considering in the next place, that we are not only as yet in a capacity of getting to heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God himself ; for he would have all men to be saved, and *to come unto the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. Yea, he hath sworn by himself, saying, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live* : and therefore calls upon us all, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Hence it is that he sent his prophets to invite us, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*, Isa. lv. 1. Yea, he came down in his own person to earth, on purpose to invite us to heaven, and to direct us the way thither : *Come to me*, saith he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matt. xi. 28. *For God so loved the world, that that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. Whence we may observe, that there are no exceptions made against any person whatsoever, nor by consequence against any of us. It is the will, yea, and command of God too, that we all turn from our evil ways and live, and that every soul amongst us walk in that narrow way that leads unto eternal bliss ; and therefore if any of us do perish, *Our blood will be upon our own heads, our destruction is from ourselves*. Hos. xiii. 9. For it is nothing but the perverseness of our own wills, and the hardness, pride, and obstinacy of our own hearts,

that can keep any soul of us out of heaven, howsoever difficult it is to come thither. For God hath shewn how desirous he is to have our company there, in that he is still pleased to grant us both the space and means of repentance. If he had no mind to have us saved, he could have shut us up long ago in hell; but he is so far from that, that he doth not only as yet continue our abode on earth, and lengthen our tranquillity here, but he still vouchsafes unto us whatsoever is necessary, yea, whatsoever can any ways conduce to our eternal happiness: we have his Scriptures, we have his sabbaths, we have his ordinances, we have his sacraments, we have his ministers, we have the promise of his Spirit, we have the overtures of Christ, and of all the merits of his death and passion, made unto us, and what can be desired more to make men happy? And yet, as if all this had not been enough, he still continues calling upon us, exhorting, commanding, yea and beseeching us most affectionately to turn, that our souls may live; for we his ministers are ambassadors to mankind for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; *We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20.* And he hath sent me unto you that read this in a particular manner at this time, to call you back out of the broad way that leads to death, into the narrow way that leads to life and happiness; *In his name therefore I exhort, yea, and beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. Strive to enter in at the strait gate,* and never leave until you have got possession of eternal glory.

Nor let us be discouraged at any difficulties that we meet with in the way, for they will soon be over; howsoever hard and difficult any duty may seem at first, by use and custom it will soon grow easy. The worst is at first setting out; when once we have been used a while to walk in this narrow way, we shall find it to be both easy and pleasant: for, as the wise man tells us, the ways of wisdom or true piety *are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. iii. 17.* Though it be rough at first, by treading it will soon grow plain; we shall soon find the words of Christ to be true, that his *yoke is easy, and his burden light, Matt. xi. 19.* All is, to be willing and obedient, and resolved upon it, to press through all duties and difficulties whatsoever to get to heaven, and then by the merits of Christ's passion, and the assistance of his grace, we need not fear but we shall come thither.

And verily, although the way to heaven should prove not only narrow, but hedged in with briars and thorns, so that we

should meet with nothing but crosses and troubles in our going to it, yet heaven will make amends for all. For we may well reckon with the apostle, *that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. viii. 18. So that whatsoever pains we are at, whatsoever trouble we suffer, in order to our attaining everlasting happiness, bears no proportion at all to the happiness we attain by it; which is so great, so exceeding great, that our tongues can neither express, nor our minds as yet conceive it, consisting not only in the freedom from all evil, but also in the enjoyment of whatsoever is really and truly good; even whatsoever can any way conduce to the making us perfectly and completely happy: so that no duty can be too great to undertake, no trouble too heavy to undergo for it. *Wherefore*, that I may use the words of the apostle to my readers, *my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 53.

By this time I hope we are all resolved within ourselves to follow our Saviour's counsel and advice, even *to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk in that narrow way that leads to life*. If we be not, we have just cause to suspect ourselves to be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity; but if we be resolved in good earnest, we cannot but be very solicitous to know what we must do in order to it; or how every one of us may *enter in at the strait gate*, so as to be happy for ever. A question of the highest importance imaginable: so that it is absolutely necessary for every soul amongst us to be thoroughly resolved in it; for it concerns our life, our immortal and eternal life, and therefore I shall endeavour to resolve it in as few and perspicuous terms as possibly I can, that the meanest capacity may understand it. But I must take leave to say beforehand, that our knowing of it will signify nothing, unless we practise it, neither will you be ever the nearer heaven, because you know the way to it, unless you also walk in it.

And therefore the first thing that I shall propound, in order to our eternal salvation, is, that we should resolve immediately in the presence of Almighty God, that we will for the future make it our great care, study, and business in this world, to *seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof* in the first place, according to our Saviour's advice and command, Matt. vi. 33. that we would not halt any longer between two opinions, and think to seek heaven and earth together, things diametrically opposite to one another. If we really think

earth to be better than heaven, what need we trouble ourselves any farther, than to heap up the riches, and to enjoy the pleasures of this world : but if we really think heaven to be better than earth, as all wise men must needs do, then let us mind that, and concern not ourselves about this. We know what our Saviour told us long ago, *No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold with the one and despise the other : you cannot serve God and mammon*, Matt. vi. 24. that is, in plain English, we cannot mind heaven and earth both together ; for we can have but one grand and principal design in the world ; and therefore if our principal design be to get wealth or any earthly enjoyment, we deceive ourselves, if we think that we mind heaven at all. For that we can never properly be said to do, until we mind it before all things whatsoever in the world besides ; and let us not say, or think within ourselves, *that this is an hard saying*, for we may assure ourselves it is no more than what we shall all find to be really true, and that never a soul of us shall ever know what heaven is, that doth not first prefer it before all things here below, and by consequence make it his principal if not only design to get thither.

Supposing us therefore to be thus resolved within ourselves, my next advice is, that we break off our former sins by repentance and showing mercy to the poor, and that for the future we live not in the wilful commission of any known sin, nor yet in the wilful neglect of any known duty. Where it is evident I advise to no more than what all men know themselves to be obliged to do ; for I dare say, there is none of us knows so little, but what if he would but live up to what he knows, he could not but be both holy and happy. Let us but avoid what we ourselves know to be sin, and do what we know to be our duty ; and though our knowledge may not be so great as others, yet our piety may be greater, and our condition better. But we must still remember, that one sin will keep us out of heaven as well as twenty ; and therefore if we ever desire to come thither, we must not only do some or many things, but all things whatsoever is required of us, to the best of our knowledge. I speak not this of myself, but Christ himself hath told us the same before, even that we must keep the commandments, all the commandments, if we desire to enter into eternal life, Matt. xix. 16, 17. Not as if it was indispensably necessary to observe every punctilio and circumstance of the moral law, for then no man could be saved ; but that it must be both our steadfast resolution, and our chief study and endeavour, to avoid whatsoever we know to be forbidden, and to perform whatsoever we know to be commanded by God.

And though by this we shall make a fair progress in the narrow way to life, yet there is still another step behind, before we can enter in at the strait gate, and that is, to believe in Jesus Christ, as our Saviour himself hath taught us, Matt. xix. 21. The sum of which duty in brief is this, that when we have done all we can in obedience to the moral law, yet we must still look upon ourselves as unprofitable servants, and not expect to be justified or saved by virtue of that obedience, but only by the merits of Christ's death and passion; humbly confiding, that in and through him, the defects of our obedience shall be remitted, our persons accepted, our natures cleansed, and our souls eternally saved. This is not only the principal but the only thing which Paul and Silas directed the keeper of the prison to, in order to his salvation, as comprehending all the rest under it, or at least supposing them, Acts xvi. 31.

Thus therefore, though obedience be the way, faith is the gate through which we must enter into life. But seeing the gate is strait as well as the way narrow, and it is as hard to believe in Christ as to observe the law, we must not think to do either by our own strength, but still implore the aid and assistance of Almighty God, and depend upon him for it. For Christ himself saith, *No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him*, John vi. 44. But we can never expect that he should draw us, unless we desire it of him. And therefore it must be our daily prayer and petition at the throne of grace, that God would vouchsafe us his especial grace and assistance, without which I cannot see how any one that knows his own heart, can expect to be saved. But our comfort is, if we do what we can, God will hear our prayers, and enable us to do what otherwise we cannot; for he never yet did, nor ever will fail any man that sincerely endeavours to serve and honour him.

Lastly, Although we are to trust in God for the answer of our prayers in this particular, yet we must not expect that he should do it immediately from himself, but we must use those means which himself hath appointed whereby to work faith, and by consequence all other graces in us. Now the Scriptures tell us, that faith comes by hearing, Rom. x. 17. Wherefore if we desire to believe, so as to be saved, we must wait upon God in his public ordinances, and there expect such influences of his grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to walk in the narrow way, and enter in at the strait gate that leads to life.

Thus I have shewn you in few terms, how to do the great

work which you came into the world about, even how to get to heaven. For howsoever hard it is to come thither, let us but resolve, as we have seen, to mind it before all things else, fear God and keep his commands to the utmost of our power, believe in Christ for the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance both of our persons and performances ; pray sincerely unto God, and wait diligently upon him for the assistance of his grace to do what he requires from us. Let us do this, and we need not fear but our souls shall live. If we leave this undone, we ourselves shall be undone for ever. And therefore let me advise all to dally no longer in a matter of such consequence as this is, but now we know the way to heaven, to turn immediately into it, and walk constantly in it. Though the way be narrow, it is not long, and though the gate be strait, it opens into eternal life. And therefore to conclude, let us remember we have now been told how to get to heaven, it is not in my power to force men thither whether they will or no ; I can only shew them the way. It is their interest as well as duty to walk in it, which if they do, I dare assure them, in the name of Christ, it is not long but they will be admitted into the choir of heaven, to sing hallelujahs for evermore.

THOUGHTS

UPON

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

IF we seriously consider with ourselves that wonder of all wonders, that mystery of all mysteries, the incarnation of the Son of God, it may justly strike us into astonishment, and an admiration what should be the reason and the end of it ; why the great and glorious, the almighty and eternal God, should take our weak and finite nature into his infinite and incomprehensible person ; why the Creator of all things should himself become a creature ; and he that made the world be himself made into it ; why the supreme Being of all beings, that gives essence and existence to all things in the world, whose glory the heaven of heavens is not able to contain, should clothe himself with flesh and become man, of the self-same nature and substance with us, who live and move and have our being in him ! Certainly it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account, that the most high God manifested himself to the sons of men in so wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But he did it questionless upon some design that was as great and glorious as the act itself. And if we would know what his end and design in coming into the world was, the Scripture assures us in general, that it was for the salvation of mankind, whose nature he assumed : *For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. And he himself tells us, *that God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. Now for the accomplishment of this no less glorious than gracious design, there are two things which it was necessary he should do for us, whilst he was upon earth, even expiate our former sins, and direct unto holiness

for the future ; both which he hath effected for us ; the one by his death, and the other by his life.

For by his death he hath paid that debt which we owed to God, having made complete satisfaction to God's justice for those sins, whereby we have incurred his displeasure : for death was threatened to all mankind in case of disobedience, and by consequence all mankind being disobedient, are obnoxious to it. Neither would it stand with the justice of God to falsify his word, nor yet with his glory, to put up the injuries that we have committed against him, without having satisfaction made unto him for them. But it being impossible that a finite creature should satisfy for those sins which were committed against the infinite God : hence the infinite God was pleased to undertake it for us, even to satisfy himself for those sins which were committed against him ; which he did, by undergoing that death which he had threatened to us in our own nature, united to the person of his own and only Son, God co-equal, co-essential, co-eternal with himself, who is therefore said *to be a propitiation for our sins*, 1 John ii. 2. Neither can there any reason imaginable be alleged, why the Son of God himself should suffer death, unless it was upon our account, and in our stead, whose nature he assumed, and in which he suffered it. But not to insist upon that now. The human nature in general having thus suffered that death in the person of the Son of God, which all mankind was otherwise bound to have undergone in their own persons ; hence it comes to pass, that we are all in a capacity of avoiding that death which we have deserved by our sins, if we do but rightly believe in Christ, and apply his sufferings to ourselves.

And as Christ by his death and passion hath thus satisfied for our sins, so hath he by his life and actions given us an exact pattern of true piety and virtue. And although I cannot say it was the only, yet questionless one great end wherefore he continued so long upon earth, and conversed so much amongst men, and that so many of his actions are delivered to us with so many circumstances as they are, was, that we by his example might learn how to carry and behave ourselves in this lower world. For as from that time to this, so from the beginning of the world to that time, there had never been a man upon the face of the earth that had lived so conformably to the law of God, that it was safe or lawful for another to follow him in all things. For all flesh was corrupt, and the very best of men were still but men, subject to failures in their lives as well as to errors in their judgments ; yea those very persons whom the Scriptures record, and God himself attesteth to have been emi-

ment in their generations for piety and justice, did oftentimes fail in both. Noah is asserted by God himself to have been righteous in his generation, Abraham to be the father of the faithful, Moses to be the meekest man upon earth, David to be a man after God's own heart, Solomon to have been the wisest man that ever lived, and Job to be a *perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil*; yet none of these most excellent persons but had their vices as well as virtues: and it is observable, that the more eminent any were in piety, the more notorious sins God hath sometimes suffered them to slip into, to keep them humble. So that from the first to the second Adam, there never lived a man of whom it could be said, This man never sinned, never transgressed the laws of God, and therefore may in all things be imitated by men.

But now as the first was made, the second Adam continued all along most pure and perfect, both in thought, word, and action; for he *did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. Never so much as a vain thought ever sprang up in his most holy heart, not so much as an idle word ever proceeded out of his divine lips, nor so much as an impertinent or frivolous action was ever performed by his sacred and most righteous hands; his whole life being nothing else but one continued act of piety towards God, justice towards men, love and charity towards all. And as himself lived, so would he have all his disciples live whilst they are here below; and therefore enjoins them that go after him, not only to deny themselves, and take up their crosses, but also to follow or imitate him unto the utmost of their power in their life and actions. So that he now expects that all those who profess themselves to be his disciples, do first deny themselves whatsoever is offensive unto him; and then that they take up their cross, so as to be ready and willing to do or suffer any thing for him, that hath done and suffered so much as he hath for us. And then, lastly, that they write after the copy that he hath set them, and walk in the steps wherein he is gone before them; even that they follow him through all duties and difficulties whatsoever, so as still to do unto the utmost of their power as he did, otherwise they in vain pretend to be his disciples. *For he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked*, 1 John ii. 6. that is, he that professeth to believe in Jesus Christ, should live as he lived while he was upon earth. Hence St. Paul, a true disciple of Christ, saith, *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. As he followed Christ, he would have others to follow him; but he would have them follow him no farther than as he followed Christ.

It is true, we were bound to be holy and righteous in all our ways, whether we had ever heard of Christ's being so or no, the law of God first obliging us to be so ; but howsoever, we have now an additional obligation upon us to be holy, *as he who hath called us was holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. i. 15. For the Scripture tells us expressly, that *Christ hath left us an example that we should follow his steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour himself commands all that come to him to learn of him, Matt. xi. 29, 30. And therefore we can never expect that he should own us for his disciples, unless we own him for our Lord and Master, so far as to obey and follow him ; he having commanded all those that come to him, to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him. And seeing we all, I hope, desire to be Christians indeed, as I have explained the two former of these duties, I shall now endeavour to give the true meaning of the latter too, that we may all so follow Christ here, as to come to him hereafter.

Now for the opening of this, we must know that we neither can nor ought to follow Christ in every thing he did when he was here below ; for even whilst he was here below, he was still the most high and mighty God, the same that he had been from eternity, and often manifested his power and glory to the sons of men, whilst he was conversing with them in their own natures, wherein it would be horrid presumption for us to pretend to follow him. As for example, *he knew the very thoughts of men*, Matt. xii. 25. which, I suppose, is somewhat past our skill to do. Hence also he judged and censured others ; *Woe unto you*, saith he, *Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto painted sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness*, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. But this we could not do though we might, not being able to search into others' hearts, neither may we do it though we could, Christ himself having expressly commanded us the contrary, saying, *Judge not, that ye be not judged*, Matt. vii. 1. Our Saviour also, as God, foretold future events, Luke xxi. 6. and wrought miracles, such as were clear demonstrations of his infinite power and Godhead ; but in this he is to be believed and admired, not followed or imitated by us. Thus also when he sent his disciples to loose another man's colt, and bring him away, Luke xix. 30. that he did as Lord and Sovereign of the world, or as the supreme Possessor and universal Proprietor of all things ; as when he commanded the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians, and carry away their jewels and raiment, for all things being his, he may give them to whom he pleaseth ; and though it would have

been a sin to have taken them away without his command, yet his command gave them a propriety in them, a right and title to them, and they had sinned unless they had obeyed the command. So here, our Saviour sent for the colt, as if it had been his own, for so really it was, as he is God, which he manifested himself to be at the same time, in that he inclined the hearts of the civil owners thereof to let him go, only upon the disciples saying, *that the Lord hath need of him*, Luke xix. 33, 34. But this he did not for our example, but to shew forth his own power and glory.

There are some things also which our blessed Saviour did as God-man, or as the Mediator betwixt God and man; as his making atonement and satisfaction for the sins of mankind, his instituting offices and ordinances, and sacraments in his church, and the like; which having an immediate respect to his office of Mediator, and being done upon that account, we neither may nor can imitate him in such things. But the things which he would have us to follow him in are such and such only as he did as mere man, that he had no immediate dependence upon or reference to either his Godhead or Mediatorship. For he having honoured our nature so far, as to take it into his own divine person, so to become really and truly man; as so, he did whatsoever man is bound to do, both as to God himself, and likewise as to men. And being absolutely perfect in all the faculties of his soul, and members of his body, he infinitely surpassed all other men both in divine graces, and moral virtues, so that as he never committed any one sin, so neither did he ever neglect any one duty, which as man he was bound to perform either to God or men, but still observed every punctilio and circumstance of the moral law; by which means he hath left us a complete pattern of true and universal holiness, and hath enjoined us all to follow it.

Hoping therefore that all who profess themselves to be the friends and disciples of Jesus Christ, desire to manifest themselves to be so, by following both his precepts and example, I shall give the reader a short narrative of his life and actions, wherein we may all see what true piety is, and what real Christianity requires of us; and may not content ourselves, as many do, with being professors, and adhering to parties or factions amongst us, but strive to be thorough Christians, and to carry ourselves as such, by walking as Christ himself walked; which that we may at least know how to do, looking upon Christ as mere man, I shall show how he did, and by consequence how we ought to carry ourselves both to God and man, and what

graces and virtues he exercised all along for our example and imitation.

Now for our more clear and methodical proceeding, in a matter of such consequence as this is, I shall begin with his behaviour towards men, from his childhood to his death.

First therefore, when he was a child of twelve years of age, it is particularly recorded of him, that he was subject or obedient to his parents, his real mother and reputed father, Luke ii. 51. It is true, he knew at that time that God himself was his Father; for, said he, *wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* ver. 49. And knowing God to be his Father, he could not but know likewise that he was infinitely above his mother; yea, that she could never have borne him, had not he first made and supported her. Yet howsoever, though as God he was Father to her, yet as man she was mother to him; and therefore he honoured and obeyed both her and him to whom she was espoused. Neither did he only respect his mother whilst he was here, but he took care of her too when he was going hence. Yea, all the pains that he suffered on the cross could not make him forget his duty to her that bore him; but seeing her standing by the cross, as himself hung on it, he committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, who *took her to his own home*, John xix. 27. Now as our Saviour did, so are we bound to carry ourselves to our earthly parents, whatsoever their temper or condition be in this world. Though God hath blessed some of us perhaps with greater estates than ever he blessed them, yet we must not think ourselves above them, nor be at all the less respectful to them. Christ, we see, was infinitely above his mother, yet as she was his mother, he was both subject and respectful to her. He was not ashamed to own her as she stood by the cross, but in the view and hearing of all there present, gave his disciple a charge to take care of her; leaving us an example, that such amongst us as have parents, provide for them if they need it, as well as for our children, both while we live, and when we come to die.

And as he was to his natural, so was he to his civil parents, the magistrates under which he lived, submissive and faithful; for though as he was God he was infinitely above them in heaven, yet as he was man he was below them on earth, having committed all civil power into their hands, without reserving any at all for himself. So that though they received their commission from him, yet now himself could not act without receiving a commission from them. And therefore having no commission from them to do it, he would not entrench so much upon

their privilege and power, as to determine the controversy betwixt the two brethren contending about their inheritance; *Man*, saith he, *who made me a judge or a divider over you?* Luke xii. 14. And to shew his submission to the civil magistrate as highly as possibly he could, rather than offend them, he wrought a miracle to pay the tax which they had charged upon him, Matt. xvii. 27. And when the officers were sent to take him, though he had more than twelve legions of angels at his service to have fought for him if he had pleased, yet he would not employ them, nor suffer his own disciples to make any resistance, Matt. xxvi. 52, 53. And though some of late days, who called themselves Christians, have acted quite contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular, I hope better things of my readers, even that they will behave themselves more like to Christ, who though he was the supreme Governor of the world, yet would not resist, but submitted to the civil power, which himself had entrusted men withal.

Moreover, although whilst he was here, he was really not only the best but greatest man upon earth, yet he carried himself to others with that meekness, humility, and respect, as if he had been the least; as he never admired any man for his riches, so neither did he despise any man for his poverty: the poor man and rich were all alike to him. He was as lowly and respectful to the lowest as he was to the highest that he conversed with. He affected no titles of honour, nor gaped after popular air, but submitted himself to the meanest services that he could for the good of others, even to the washing of his own disciples' feet, and all to teach us that we can never think too lowly of ourselves, nor do any thing that is beneath us; propounding himself as our example, especially in this particular, *Learn of me*, saith he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matt. xi. 29.

His humility also was the more remarkable, in that his bounty and goodness to others was so great, for he *went about doing good*, Acts x. 38. Wheresoever you read he was, you still read of some good work or other which he did there. Whatsoever company he conversed with, they still went better from him than they came unto him, if they came out of a good end. By him, as himself said, the blind received their sight, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, and the deaf heard, the dead were raised up, and the poor had the Gospel preached unto them, Matt. xi. 5. Yea, it is observable, that we never read of any person whatsoever that came unto him, desiring any real kindness or favour of him, but he still received it, and that whether he was friend or foe. For indeed, though

he had many inveterate and implacable enemies in the world, yet he bare no malice against them, but expressed as much love and favour to them as to his greatest friends. Insomuch that when they had gotten him upon the cross, and fastened his hands and feet unto it, in the midst of all the pain and torment which they put him to, he still prayed for them, Luke xxiii. 34.

Oh! how happy, how blessed a people should we be, could we but follow our blessed Saviour in this particular! How well would it be with us, could we but be thus good and loving to one another, as Christ was to all, even his most bitter enemies! We may assure ourselves it is not only our misery, but our sin too, unless we be so. And our sin will be the greater, now we know our Master's pleasure, unless we do it. And therefore let all such amongst us, as desire to carry ourselves as Christ himself did, and as becometh his disciples in the world, begin here.

Be submissive and obedient to our parents and governors, humble in our own sight, despise none, but be charitable, loving, and good to all. By this shall all men know that we are Christ's disciples indeed.

Having thus seen our Saviour's carriage towards men, we shall now consider his piety and devotion towards God, not as if it was possible for me to express the excellency and perfection of those religious acts which he performed continually within his soul to God, every one of his faculties being as entire in itself, and as perfect in its acts, as it was first made or designed to be. There was no darkness, nor so much as gloominess in his mind, no error or mistake in his judgment, no bribery or corruption in his conscience, no obstinacy or perverseness in his will, no irregularity nor disorder in his affections, no spot, no blot, no blemish, not the least imperfection or infirmity in his whole soul. And therefore, even whilst his body was on earth, his head and heart were still in heaven. For he never troubled his head, nor so much as concerned himself about any thing here below, any farther than to do all the good he could, his thoughts being wholly taken up with considering how to advance God's glory and man's eternal happiness. And as for his heart, that was the altar on which the sacred fire of divine love was always burning, the flames whereof continually ascended up to heaven, being accompanied with the most ardent and fervent desires of, and delight in, the chiefest good.

But it must not be expected that I should give an exact description of that eminent and most perfect holiness which our

blessed Saviour was inwardly adorned with, and continually employed in ; which I am as unable to express, as desirous to imitate. But howsoever, I shall endeavour to mind the reader in general of such acts of piety and devotion, which are particularly recorded, on purpose for our imitation.

First therefore, it is observed of our Saviour, that from a child he increased in wisdom, as he did in stature, Luke ii. 52. Where by wisdom we are to understand the knowledge of God, and of divine things. For our Saviour having taken our nature into his person, with all its frailties and infirmities, as it is a created being, he did not in that nature presently know all things which were to be known. It is true, as God, he then knew all things as well as he had from all eternity. But we are now speaking of him, as a man, like one of us in all things, except sin. But we continue some considerable time after we are born before we know any thing, or come to the use of our reasons ; the rational soul not being able to exert or manifest itself, until the natural phlegm or radical moisture of the body, which in infants is predominant, be so digested, that the body be rightly qualified, and its organs fitted for the soul to work upon and to make use of. And though our Saviour questionless came to the use of his reason, as man, far sooner than we are wont to do, yet we must not think that he knew all things as soon as he was born ; for that the nature he assumed was not capable of ; neither could he then be said, as he is, to increase in wisdom, for where there is perfection there can be no increase.

But here, before we proceed farther, it will be necessary to answer an objection which some may make against this. For if our Saviour, as man, knew not all things, then he was not perfect, nor absolutely free from sin, ignorance itself being a sin.

To this I have these things to answer ; first, it is no sin for a creature to be ignorant of some things, because it is impossible for a creature to know all things ; for to be omniscient is God's prerogative, neither is a creature capable of it, because he is but finite ; whereas the knowledge of all things, or omniscience, is itself an infinite act, and therefore to be performed only by an infinite Being. Hence it is that no creature in the world ever was or ever could be made omniscient ; but there are many things which Adam in his integrity, and the very angels themselves, are ignorant of ; as our Saviour, speaking of the day of judgment, saith, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*, Mark xiii. 32. But the angels are never the less perfect because they know not this. Nay, it is

observable, that the Son himself, as man, knew it not, *neither*, saith he, *the Son, but the Father* ; and if he knew it not then, much less was it necessary for him to know it when a child.

Secondly, As to be ignorant of some things is no sin, so neither is any ignorance at all sin, but that whereby a man is ignorant of what he is bound to know, *for all sin is the transgression of a law*. And therefore, if there be no law obliging me to know such or such things, I do not sin by being ignorant of them, for I transgress no law. Now though all men are bound by the law of God to know him, and their duty to him, yet infants, so long as infants, are not, neither can be obnoxious or subject to that law, they being in a natural incapacity, yea impossibility to perform it, but as they become by degrees capable of knowing any thing, they are obliged questionless to know him first, from whom they receive their knowledge.

And thus it was that our blessed Saviour perfectly fulfilled the law of God, in that although he might still continue ignorant of many things ; yet howsoever he all along knew all that he was bound to know, and as he grew by degrees more and more capable of knowing any thing, so did he increase still more in true wisdom, or in the knowledge of God ; so that by that time he was twelve years old, he was able to dispute with the great doctors and learned rabbies amongst the Jews ; and after that as he grew in stature, so did he grow in wisdom too, and in favour both with God and man.

And verily, although we did not follow our blessed Saviour in this particular when we were children, we ought howsoever to endeavour it now we are men and women, even to grow in wisdom, and every day add something to our spiritual stature, so as to let never a day pass over our heads, without being better acquainted with God's goodness to us, or our duty to him. And by this example of our Saviour's growing in wisdom when a child, we should also learn to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and not strive so much to make them rich as to use all means to make them wise and good, that they may do as their Saviour did, even grow in wisdom and in stature, and in the favour both of God and man.

And as our Saviour grew in wisdom when a child, so did he use and manifest it when he came to be a man, by devoting himself wholly unto the service of the living God, and to the exercise of all true grace and virtue, wherein his blessed soul was so much taken up, that he had neither time nor heart to mind those toys and trifles which silly mortals upon earth are so much apt to dote on. It is true all the world was his, but

he had given it all away to others, not reserving for himself so much as an house to put his head in, Matt. viii. 20. And what money he had hoarded up, you may gather from his working a miracle to pay his tribute, or poll money, which came not to much above a shilling. Indeed he came into the world and went out again, without ever taking any notice of any pleasures, honours, or riches in it, as if there had been no such thing here, as really there was not, nor ever will be; all the pomp and glory of this deceitful world having no other being or existence, but only in our distempered fancies and imaginations; and therefore our Saviour, whose fancy was sound, and his imagination untainted, looked upon all the world and the glory of it as not worthy to be looked upon, seeing nothing in it wherefore it should be desired. And therefore instead of spending his time in the childish pursuit of clouds and shadows, he made the service of God not only his business, but his recreation too, his food as well as work. *It is my meat*, saith he, *to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*, John iv. 34. This was all the riches, honours and pleasures, which he sought for in the world, even to do the will of him that sent him hither, and to finish the work which he came about; and so he did before he went away; *Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou sentest me to do*, John xvii. 4. If therefore we would be Christ's disciples, so as to follow him, we see what we must do, and how we must behave and carry ourselves whilst we are here below; we must not spend our time, nor throw away our precious and short-lived days upon the trifles and impertinencies of this transient world, as if we came hither for nothing else but to rake and scrape up a little dust and dirt together, or to wallow ourselves like swine in the mire of carnal pleasures and delights. No, we may assure ourselves we have greater things to do, and far more noble designs to carry on, whilst we continue in this vale of tears, even *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and to make our calling and election sure*, and to serve God here, so as to enjoy him for ever. This is the work we came about, and which we must not only do, but do it too with pleasure and delight, and never leave until we have accomplished it; we must make it our only pleasure to please God, account it our only honour to honour him, and esteem his love and favour to be the only wealth and riches that we can enjoy; we must think ourselves no farther happy, than we find ourselves to be truly holy, and therefore devote our lives wholly to him, in whom we live. This is to live as Christ lived, and by consequence as Christians ought to do.

I might here instance in several other acts of piety and devotion, which our Saviour was not only eminent for, but continually exercised himself in, as his humble and perfect submission and resignation of his own will to God's, his most ardent love unto him, and zeal for him, as also his firm and steadfast trust and confidence on him; so that nothing could ever disquiet or discompose his mind; but still his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. In all which, it is both our duty and interest to follow him, our happiness as well as holiness consisting in our dependence upon God, and inclinations to him.

But we should do well to observe withal, that our Saviour performed external as well as inward worship and devotion unto God; particularly we often find him praising God, and praying unto him, and that with his eyes lift up to heaven in a most humble and reverential posture, John xvii. 1. Luke xxii. 41. Matt. xxvi. 39. yea, when he was to choose and ordain some of his disciples to the work of the ministry, and to succeed him after his departure, under the name of apostles, he spent the night before in prayer to God, Luke vi. 12. I confess the words there used, *ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, will scarce admit of that interpretation or exposition, signifying rather in a strict sense, that he went into a place appointed for prayer, which was usually called *a place of prayer*, which kind of places were very frequent in Judæa, and some of them continued till Epiphanius's time, as himself asserts; and they were only plots of ground inclosed with a wall, and open above, and were ordinarily, if not always, upon mountains, whither the Jews used to resort to pray together in great multitudes. And this seems to be the proper meaning of these words, where our Saviour is said to go into a mountain, and to continue all night, *ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *in one of those proseucha's of God, a place dedicated to his service*. Yet howsoever, we cannot suppose but that he went thither, to do what the place whither he went was designed for, even to pray. And by consequence, that seeing he stayed there all night, unquestionless he spent the whole night in prayer and meditation, in order to so great a work as the ordaining his apostles was.

Here therefore was another copy which our Master Christ hath set us to write after, a lesson that all must learn and practise that would be his disciples. Though we ordinarily converse with nothing but dirt and clay, and with our fellow worms on earth, yet as Christ did, so should we often retire from the tumults and bustles of the world, to converse with him that made us; both to praise him for the mercies we have received,

and to pray unto him for what we want; only we shall do well to have a care that we do not perform so solemn a duty as this is, after a careless and perfunctory manner, because none sees us but God; for his seeing us is infinitely more than if all the world besides should see us, and we must still remember, that prayer is the greatest work that a creature can be engaged in, and therefore to be performed with the greatest seriousness, reverence, and earnestness that possibly we can raise up our spirits to. And besides our daily devotions which we owe, and ought to pay to God whensoever we set upon any great and weighty business, we must be sure to follow our Saviour's steps, in setting some time apart, proportionably to the business we undertake, wherein to ask God's counsel, and desire his direction and blessing in the most serious and solemn manner that possibly we can. I need not tell the reader what benefit we shall receive by this means; none of us that shall try it but will soon find it by experience.

I shall observe only one thing more concerning our Saviour's devotion, and that is, that although he took all occasions to instruct or admonish his disciples or followers, whether in the fields or upon the mountains, or in private houses, even wheresoever he could find an opportunity to do it; yet upon the sabbath-days he always frequented the public worship of God; he went into the synagogues, places appointed for public prayers, and reading and hearing of the word, a thing which I fear many amongst us do not think of, or at least not rightly consider it; for if they did, they would not dare, methinks, to walk so directly contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular; for St. Luke tells us, that *when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day*, Luke iv. 16. From whence none of us but may easily observe, that our Saviour did not go into a synagogue, or church, by the by, to see what they were doing there; neither did he happen to go in by chance upon the sabbath-day, but it was his custom and constant practice to do so, even to go each sabbath-day to the public ordinance, there to join with the congregation in performing their public service and devotions to Almighty God.

And here I must take leave to say, that was there no other law, nor any other obligations amongst us (as there be many) to frequent the public worship of God, this practice and example of our blessed Saviour doth sufficiently and effectually oblige us all to a constant attendance upon the public ordinance. For as we are Christians, and profess ourselves to be his disciples, we are all bound to follow him; he commands

us here and elsewhere to it; and certainly there is nothing that we can be obliged to follow him in, more than in the manner of his worshipping God. And therefore, whosoever out of any humour, fancy, or slothfulness, shall presume to neglect the public worship of God, he doth not only act contrary unto Christ's example, but transgresses also his command, that enjoins him to follow that example. What they who are guilty of this will have to answer for themselves, when they come to stand before Christ's tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all those who profess themselves to be Christians, should follow Christ in all things that they can, and by consequence in this particular, and that they sin who do not.

But in whatsoever other things we may fail, I know the generality of us do herein follow our Saviour's steps, that we are usually present at the public worship of God; but then I hope this is not all that we follow him in, but that as we follow him to the public ordinances, so we do likewise in our private devotions, yea, and in our behaviour both to God and man. Which that we may the better do, I have endeavoured to show wherein especially we ought to follow Christ, in being obedient to our parents, subject to our governors, lowly to the lowest, loving and charitable unto all; as also, in growing in wisdom and the knowledge of God, in contemning the world, in devoting ourselves wholly to the service of God, in resigning our wills to his, in loving of him, in trusting on him above all things else, in daily praying unto God, and frequenting his public ordinances; to which I may also add, in denying ourselves, and taking up our crosses, which himself hath done before us, as well as required of us.

What now remains, but that seeing the steps wherein our Saviour walked, we should all resolve to walk together in them. And I hope that I need not use arguments to persuade any to it; it is enough one would think, that Christ himself, whose name we bear, expects and commands it from us. And in that the sum of all our religion consisteth in obeying and following Christ, the circumstances of whose life are recorded on purpose that we may imitate him unto the utmost of our power, not only in the matter but manner of our actions, even in the circumstances as well as in the substance of them.

But this I dare say we all both know and believe, even that it is our duty to follow Christ; and therefore it is a sad, a dismal thing to consider, that amongst them that know it, there are so few that do it: but even those that go under the name of Christians themselves, do more generally follow the beasts of the field, or the very fiends of hell, rather than Christ our

Saviour. For all covetous worldings that look no higher than earth, and all luxurious epicures that labour after no other but sensual pleasures, whom do they imitate but the beasts that perish. And as for the proud and arrogant, the deceitful and malicious, seducers of their brethren, and oppressors of their neighbours, all backbiters, and false-accusers, all deriders of religion, and apostates from it, they are all of their father the devil, and his works they do. And if all such persons should be taken from amongst us, how few would be left behind that follow Christ? very few indeed! but I hope there would be some. And oh that all who read this would be in the number of them, even that they would all from this day forward resolve to come as near our blessed Saviour in all their actions both to God and man, as possibly they can; which if we once did, what holy, what happy lives should we then lead? how should we then antedate both the work and joys of heaven? and how certain should we be to be there ere long, where Christ that is the pattern of our lives here, will be the portion of our souls for ever.

Thus I have shown what Christ requires of those who would be his disciples, enjoining them to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. And now I have done my duty in explaining these words, it is all my readers as well as mine to practise them, which I heartily wish we would all resolve to do; and I must say, it highly concerns us all to do so; for we can never be saved but by Christ, nor by him unless we be his disciples; neither can we be his disciples, unless we do what here is required of us. And therefore if we care not whether we be saved or no, we may think no more of these things, nor trouble our heads about them; but if we really desire to come to heaven, let us remember he, who alone can bring us thither, hath told us, that *we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him.*

THOUGHTS

UPON

OUR CALL AND ELECTION.

MANY are called, (saith our Saviour, Matt. xxii. 14.) *but few chosen*. Oh dreadful sentence, who is able to hear it without trembling and astonishment! If he had said, that of all the men that are born into the world there are but few saved, this would not have struck such a fear and horror into us; for we might still hope, that though Turks, Jews, and Heathens, which are far the greatest part of the world, should all perish, yet we few in comparison of them, who are baptized into his name, who profess his Gospel, who enjoy his ordinances, who are admitted to his sacraments, that all we who are called to him, might be chosen and saved by him; but that of those very persons who are called, there are but few chosen: what a sharp and terrible sentence is this! who can bear it? especially considering by whom it was pronounced, even by Christ himself. If a mere man had spoken it, we might hope it was but an human error; if an angel had uttered it, we might think it possible he might be mistaken; but Christ himself, the eternal Son of God, who is truth and infallibility itself, that he should assert it, that he who laid down his own life to redeem ours, that he who came into the world on purpose to call and save us, that he in whom alone it is possible for us to be chosen to salvation, that he should say, *Many are called, but few chosen*. This is an hard saying indeed, which may justly make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to tremble at the hearing of it. And yet we see our Saviour here expressly saith it, and not only here neither, but again, Matt. xx. 16. Whence we may gather, that it is a thing he would have us often think of, and a matter of more than ordinary importance, in that he did not think it enough, to tell us of it at once, but he repeated it in the same words again, that we might be sure to remember it, and take especial notice of it, that *many are called, but few chosen*.

In which words, that we may understand our Saviour's meaning aright, we must first consider the occasion of them in this place, which in brief was this. Our Saviour, according to the custom that obtained in those days amongst the wise men of the east, delighting to use parables, thereby to represent his heavenly doctrine more clearly to the understanding of his hearers, in this chapter compares the *kingdom of God to a certain king that made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding*, ver. 2, 3. Where, by the king, he means the eternal God, the universal Monarch of the world, who intending to make a marriage betwixt his son and the church, styled the spouse of Christ, he first sent to his guests before bidden, even the Jews, the seed of Abraham his friend, and at that time his peculiar people. But they not hearkening to the first invitation, he sends to them again, ver. 4. Yet they still made light of it, having it seems, as we most have, other business to mind, and therefore went their way, some to their farms, others to their merchandize, ver. 5. By which our Saviour intimates, that one great reason why men accept not of the overtures of grace made unto them in the Gospel, is because their minds are taken up with the cares of this world, looking upon their farms, their trades, and merchandize, as things of greater moment than heaven and eternal glory. Yea, some of them took the servants which were sent to invite them, *and treated them spitefully and slew them*, ver. 6. Why, what is the matter? what injury have the servants, the prophets, the apostles, or the ministers of Christ done them? What, do they come to oppress them, to take their estates from them? To disgrace, or bring them into bondage? No, they only come to invite them to a marriage feast, to tender them the highest comforts and refreshments imaginable both for their souls and bodies. And is this all the recompence they give them for their kindness, not only to refuse it, but to abuse them that bring it? Well might this glorious King be angry and incensed at such an affront offered him as this was; and therefore *he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city*, ver. 7. as we all know he did to the murdering Jews, who soon after this were destroyed, and their royal city Jerusalem burnt. But now the feast is prepared, shall there be none to eat it? Yes, for seeing they who were first bidden were not worthy to partake of his dainties, he orders his servants *to go into the high-ways, and bid as many as they could find to the marriage*, ver. 8, 9. The Jews having refused the Gospel, God sends to invite the Gentiles to it, who hitherto had been reckoned aliens to the commonwealth

of Israel, *strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. But now they also are bidden to the wedding, they are called to Christ, and invited to partake of all the privileges of the Gospel. For the servants having received the command, *went out into the highway*, even into all the bye-places and corners of the world, *and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests*, ver. 10. But amongst these too, when the king came to see his guests, he saw one that had not on a wedding garment, ver. 11. Under which one are represented all of the same kind, who have not on their wedding garment, that is, who walk not worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, not being clothed with humility, faith, and other graces suitable for a Christian. All which, notwithstanding they were invited, yea and came in too upon their invitation, yet they are cast out again into utter darkness, Matt. xxii. 12, 13. And then he adds, *for many are called, but few chosen*; as if he should have said, The Jews were called, but would not come; the Gentiles are called, they come, but some of them are cast out again; so that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen. *For many are called, but few chosen.*

Which short, but pithy saying, of our blessed Saviour, that we may rightly understand, we shall first consider the former part of it, *many are called*, and then the latter, *but few chosen*. That we may apprehend the full meaning of the first part of this proposition, *many are called*, there are three things to be considered.

1. What is here meant by being called.
2. How men are called.
3. How it appears that *many are called*.

As for the first, what we are here to understand by being called. We must know that this is meant only of God's voice to mankind, making known his will and pleasure to them, calling upon them to act accordingly; and so inviting them to his service here, and to the enjoyment of his presence hereafter.

But to explain the nature of it more particularly, we must consider the *terminus a quo*, and the *terminus ad quod*, *what it is God calls us from, and what it is he calls us to*; both which we shall speak to, jointly or together.

1. He calls us from darkness to light, from error and ignorance, to truth and knowledge: as he made us rational and knowing creatures at first, so he would have us to be again, so as to understand and know him that made us, and that gave us the power of understanding and knowing; and not employ

the little knowledge we have only about the affairs of our bodies, our trades, and callings in this world, nor yet in learning arts and sciences only, but principally about the concerns of our immortal souls, that we may know him that is the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; without which all our other knowledge will avail us nothing. We are still in the dark, and know not whither we are going; out of which dark, and by consequence, uncomfortable as well as dangerous estate, God of his infinite mercy is pleased to call us, that we *should shew forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. ii.

2. God calls us from superstition and idolatry, to serve and worship him. For we are called to turn *from idols, to serve the living and true God*, 1 Thes. i. 9. Thus he called Abraham out of Chaldea, and his posterity the Israelites out of Egypt, places of idolatry, that they might serve and worship him, and him alone. Thus he called our ancestors of this nation out of their heathenish superstitions, to the knowledge and worship of himself, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And thus he called upon us to *flee from idolatry*, 1 Cor. x. 14. not only from the heathenish or popish, but from all idolatry whatsoever, and by consequence from covetousness, which God himself tells us in plain terms is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. And so indeed is our allowing ourselves in any known sin whatsoever; for we idolize it by setting it up in our hearts and affections, instead of God; yea, and bow down to it, and serve it, though not in our bodies yet in our souls, which is the highest kind of idolatry which God calls us from.

3. Hence he also calls us from all manner of sin and profaneness, to holiness and piety, both in our affections and actions. For as the apostle saith, *God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness*, 1 Thess. iv. 7. Where by uncleanness he means all manner of lusts and corruptions, which defile the soul, and make it unclean and impure in the sight of God. These God doth not call us to, but from: it is holiness and universal righteousness that he calls us to, and commands us to follow. This is the great thing that Christ in his Gospel calls for; *for the grace of God*, which is in his Gospel, *hath now appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. He now commandeth all men every where to repent, and turn to God, Acts xvii. 30. Hence he is said to have *called us with an holy calling*, 2 Tim. i. 9. And as he who hath called us is holy, so ought we to be *holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. i. 15. Thus

therefore we all are called to be an holy people, a people zealous of good works, a people devoted wholly to the service of the living God. In brief, we are called to be saints, a people consecrated unto God; and therefore, as every vessel in the temple was holy, so we being called to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, every thing in us should be holy; our thoughts should be holy, our affections holy, our words holy, our desires holy; every faculty of our souls, every member of our bodies, and every action of our lives, should be holy; every thing within us, every thing about us, every thing that comes from us, should be holy; and all because our calling is holy; and we ought to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*, Eph. iv. 1.

4. God calls us from carnal and temporal things, to mind heaven and eternal glory. He sees and observes how eager we are in prosecuting of this world's vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doting upon such transitory and unsatisfying trifles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlasting peace; not to be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we *may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God*, Rom. xii. 2. *To set our affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon earth*, Col. iii. 2. *To seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness* in the first place, Matt. vi. 33. Hence it is styled *an heavenly calling*, Heb. iii. 1. and *an high calling*, Phil. iii. 14. because we are called by it to look after high and heavenly things. He that made us hath so much kindness for us, that it pities him to see us moil and toil, and spend our strength and labour, about such low and pitiful, such impertinent and unnecessary things, which himself knows can never satisfy us, and therefore he calls and invites us to himself, and to the enjoyment of his own perfections, which are able to fill and satiate our immortal souls.

5. Hence, lastly, we are called from misery and danger, to the state of happiness and felicity. As he called Lot out of Sodom, when fire and brimstone was ready to fall upon it, so he calls us from the world and sin, because otherwise wrath and fury will fall upon our heads. Or, as he called Noah into the ark, to preserve him from the overflowing flood, so he calls us into his service, and to the faith of his Son, that so we may escape that flood of misery, which will suddenly drown the impenitent and unbelieving world. And therefore we must not think that he calls and invites us to him, because he stands in need of us, or wants our service; no, it is not because he cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy with-

out him, nor in him neither unless we come unto him. This is the only reason why he calls us so earnestly to him; *For as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel!* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Let us not stand therefore pausing upon it, and considering whether we shall hearken to God's call or no, nor say severally within ourselves, How shall I part with my profits? How shall I deny myself the enjoyment of my sensual pleasures? How shall I forsake my darling and beloved sins? But rather say, How shall I abide the judgment of the great God? How shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation as I am now called and invited to? For we may assure ourselves, this is the great and only end why God calls so pathetically upon us to come unto him, that so we may be delivered from his wrath, and enjoy his love and favour for ever.

Thus we see what it is that God calls mankind both from and to; he calls them from darkness to light, from idolatry to true religion, from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, and from the deepest misery to the highest happiness that they are capable of. The next thing to be considered is, how God is pleased to call us; for which we must know, that,

1. He hath vouchsafed to call some with his own mouth, as I may so speak, even by immediate revelations from himself. Thus he called Abraham and Moses, and several of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. And thus he called Paul, Christ himself calling from heaven to him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Acts ix. 4. And it is observable, that whosoever were thus called, they always obeyed. But this is not the calling here spoken of.

2. God calls all mankind by his works and providences. All the creatures in the world are as so many tongues declaring the wisdom, power, goodness, and glory of God unto us, and so call upon us to praise, honour, and obey him. And all his providences have their several and distinct voices; his mercies bespeak our affections, and his judgments our fear. *Hear ye, saith he, the rod, and who hath appointed it,* Mic. vi. 9. The rod, it seems, hath a voice, which we are bound to hear. But though many, yea, all the world, be called this way, yet neither is this the calling our Saviour means, when he saith, *many are called, but few chosen.*

3. Lastly, Therefore God hath called many by the ministry of his word, and of his servants the prophets, the apostles and their successors declaring it, and explaining it to them. Thus God spake to our fathers by the prophets, rising up early and

sending them to call sinners to repentance, by shewing them their sins, and the dangerous consequences of them. As when he sent his prophet Isaiah, he bids him *cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins*, Isaiah, lviii. 1. And they being convinced of and humbled for their sins, then he sent his prophets to invite them to accept of grace and pardon from him, saying, in the language of the same prophet, *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price*, Isaiah, v. 1, 2, 3. And God having thus at sundry times and in divers manners spoken in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, Heb. i. 1, 2. who therefore said with his own mouth, that he *came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 13. Hence as soon as ever he entered upon his ministry, he called to mankind, saying, *Repent, and believe the Gospel*, Mark i. 15. and *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden*, Matt. xi. 28. And when he was to depart hence, he left order with his apostles, to go and call all nations, and teach them what he had commanded, promising that himself would be with them *to the end of the world*, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. By virtue therefore of this commission, not only the apostles themselves, but all succeeding ministers in all ages to the end of the world, are sent to call mankind to embrace the Gospel, and to accept of the terms propounded in it. So that when we his ministers preach unto them, or call upon them to repent and turn to God, they must not think we come in our own name; for, as the apostle tells the Corinthians, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God*. 2 Cor. v. 20. Hence in Scripture we are called also *heralds*, and our office is *to proclaim as heralds*, the will and pleasure of Almighty God unto mankind, to offer peace and pardon to all that have rebelled against our Lord and master the King of heaven, if they will now come in, and submit themselves unto him; if not, in a most solemn and dreadful manner, to denounce his wrath and heavy displeasure against them. So that as the angel was sent to call Lot out of Sodom, when the Lord was going to rain fire and brimstone from heaven upon it; so God being ready every moment to shower down his fury and vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving world, he sends us to call men out of it, to open their eyes, and to turn them from their

ness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18. and to invite them to his court, to live with him and be happy for ever.

And that this is the proper meaning of our blessed Saviour, in this place, where he saith, *many are called*, is plain from the parable whereon these words are grounded; where the king is said to have sent his servants to call the guests which were bidden to the marriage feast, and put words into their mouths, telling them what to say, verse 4, as he hath given us also instructions how to call and invite mankind in his holy word. And when of the many which were called, there would but few come; hence our Saviour uttered this expression, that *many are called, but few chosen*. From whence it is clear and obvious, that our Saviour means not such as were called immediately from God himself, for they were but few; nor yet such as are called by the works of creation and providence, for so not many only, but all are called; but he means such as are called by his word, and by his servants and ministers reading, preaching, and explaining of it.

And verily that many have been and still are called in this sense, which is the next thing I promised to shew, I need not stand long to prove. For our Saviour having commanded his apostles to go and call all nations to his faith, which is the proper meaning of that place, Matt. xxviii. 19. it cannot be denied but that the apostles presently dispersed themselves, and preached the Gospel to all nations; which they did so effectually, that in a few years after, even in St. Paul's time, *the mystery of the Gospel was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. and in St. John's time, *some were redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, Rev. vii. 9. Yea, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, that the ancients compared it to lightning, that immediately dispersed itself, and was seen all the world over. So that in less than two hundred years, *ab ortu solis ad occasum lex Christiana suscepta est, the Christian religion was received all the world over from east to west*, as Lactantius who then lived asserts. From which time therefore, how many thousands of millions of souls have been called to the faith of Christ, by the preaching of his Gospel. And not to speak of other nations, how soon did the Sun of righteousness arise upon these western parts of the world, and particularly upon this nation, wherein we dwell; several of Christ's own disciples and apostles, as Simon Peter, Simon Zelotes, James the son of Zebedee, Joseph of Arimathea, Aristobolus, and St. Paul himself, being all recorded by ecclesiastical writers, to have preached

the Gospel to this nation. Be sure in less than two hundred years the Christian faith was here received, Tertullian himself saying expressly, *Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo subdita, the Romans could scarcely come at Britanny, but Christ hath conquered it.* And soon after him, Arnobius saith that the Gospel *nec ipsos Indos latuit a parte orientis, nec ipsos Britannos a parte occidentis, was not concealed either from the Indians in the eastern part of the world, nor from the Britons themselves in the west.* And since the Gospel was first here planted, how many have been called by it to the faith of Christ? Yea, through the mercy of the most high God, how many at this moment are called all the nation over? And to come still closer to ourselves, all that read this have I doubt not been often called heretofore, and now are called again. For in the name of the most high God, and of his Son Christ, *I pray and beseech you all as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,* 1 Peter ii. 11. to repent of your sins, and believe the Gospel. I call and invite you also to accept the offers of grace and pardon which are made you in Jesus Christ, to sit down with him at his own table, and feed by faith upon his body and blood, that so you may partake of the merits of his death and passion, and so live with him for evermore. Thus you are all called, but I fear there are but few chosen.

Having thus explained and proved the first part of this proposition, that *many are called*, we must now consider the meaning, truth, and reasons of the other part of it, *but few are chosen.* For *many are called, but few chosen*; that is, there are but few which are so approved of by God, as to be elected and chosen from the other part of the world, to inherit eternal life. That this is the main drift and scope of our blessed Saviour in these words, is plain from the foregoing parable, which gave him occasion to pronounce them. For there all that were first called refused to come to the marriage feast which they were invited to; and of them which came, some had not on their wedding garment; that is, although they came in to the outward profession of the Gospel, yet did not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and therefore they likewise were excluded; upon which our Saviour adds these words, *For many are called, but few chosen.* From whence it is easy to observe his meaning in general to be only this, that although many are called to partake of the privileges and graces of his Gospel, yet seeing of those who were called, many would not come at all; and of those who come, many do not come so as the Gospel requires of them, with their wed-

ding garment on ; hence of the many who are called, there are but few chosen to partake of the marriage feast, that is, of the glorious promises made in the Gospel, to those that come aright unto it. Few, not absolutely in themselves considered, but few comparatively in respect of the many which are not chosen ; or rather few in comparison of the many which are called. For if we consider them absolutely in themselves, they are certainly very many ; our Saviour himself saith, *many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, &c.* Matt. viii. 11. And in the Revelations you read of many thousands that were sealed of every tribe, yea, *there was a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white, and palms in their hands,* Rev. vii. 9. Insomuch that for all the numberless number of fallen or apostatized angels, St. Austin was of opinion, that there will be as many men saved, as there are angels damned, or rather more. For, saith he, upon the fall of the angels and men, God determined to gather together by his infinite grace so many out of the mortal progeny, *ut inde suppleat et instauret partem quæ lapsa est angelorum, that he might from thence make up and restore that part of angels which was fallen ; ac sic illa dilecta et superna civitas non fraudetur suorum numero civium, quin etiam fortassis et uberiore letetur. And so that beloved city which is above may not be deprived of the number of its citizens, but perhaps rejoice in having more.* Aug. de Civ. Dei. lib. xxii. c. 1. which notion he grounds upon those words of our Saviour in this chapter, *for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven,* Matt. xxii. 30. or, as the words may be interpreted, they are equal to the angels, and equal in number to the fallen, as well as in quality to the elect angels, as that learned and pious father expounds it. But howsoever that be, this is certain, that the number of men chosen and saved, will be very great, considered absolutely in themselves ; and yet notwithstanding, if they be compared with the many more which are called, they are but very few, Christ's flock is, as himself styles it, *a very little, little flock,* Luke xii. 32. that is, in comparison of the vast multitudes of souls that flock after the world and sin. As in a garden there are but few choice flowers, in comparison of the weeds that grow in it ; there are but very few diamonds and precious stones, in comparison of pebbles and gravel upon the sea-shore ; in the richest mines there is far more dross than gold and silver ; so is it in the church of Christ ; there is but little wheat, in com-

parison of the tares that come up with it ; Christ hath a great many hangers on, but few faithful and obedient servants ; there are many that speak him very fair, and make a plausible profession of the faith and religion which he taught, but where shall we find one that practiseth it ? If there be here one and there another, two or three in a parish, or perhaps in a whole city, what is this to the innumerable company of such as are called by him, and baptized into his name, and yet leave him to follow after the world and vanity : oh what just ground had our Saviour to say, *many are called, but few chosen ?*

But to demonstrate the truth of this proposition still more fully, and as clearly as possibly I can, I must first lay down one principle as a *postulatum*, which I suppose all will acknowledge to be true, and that is this, that whatsoever profession a man makes of the Christian religion, it will avail him nothing without the practice of it ; or if you will take it in our Saviour's own words, *Not every one, saith he, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, Matt. vii. 21.* Or, as the apostle expresseth it, *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified, Rom. ii. 13.* That is, it is not our hearing and knowing our duty that will stand us in any stead before God, but our doing of it ; it is not our believing that we may be saved by believing in Christ, whereby we can be saved, without actual believing in him, without such a faith whereby we depend upon him, for the pardon and salvation of our immortal souls, and consequently for the assistance of his grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to obey his Gospel, and to perform all such things as himself hath told us are necessary in order to our everlasting happiness : and whatsoever faith we pretend to, unless it comes to this, that it put us upon universal obedience to all the commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no good, for it is not such a faith as Christ requires, which always works by love, conquers the world, subdues sin, purifies the heart, and sanctifies the whole soul wheresoever it comes. It is such a faith as this which is the wedding garment, without which no man is chosen nor admitted to partake of those celestial banquets, which Christ our Saviour hath provided for us. And therefore no man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himself to be elected or chosen to eternal salvation, that is not holy in all manner of conversation ; God himself having told us expressly, *that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14.* So that having God's own word for it, we may positively and confidently assert, that

no man in the world can upon just grounds be reputed as chosen by God, that doth not in all things, to the utmost of his power, conform himself, and adjust his actions to the laws and commands of God. So that how many soever are called, how many soever come into the outward profession of the Christian religion, yet none of them can be said to be chosen, but such as are real and true saints. And how few those are, is a matter which we have more cause to bewail than to prove. Howsoever, that we may see that we have but too much reason to believe this assertion of our blessed Saviour, that *many are called, but few chosen*, I desire that we may but consider the estate of Christendom in general, and weigh the lives and actions of all such as profess to believe in Christ, view them well, and examine them by the Gospel rules, and then we shall soon conclude that there are but few chosen; or to bring it home more closely to ourselves, who are all called, and take out from amongst us all such persons as come not up to the terms of the Gospel, and we shall find that there are but few behind, but few indeed who can be discerned and judged by the light either of reason or Scripture to be chosen by God to eternal life. For take out from amongst us,

1. All atheistical persons, who though they are baptized into the name of Christ, and so are called to the faith of Christ, yet neither believe in Christ nor God, such fools as say in their heart, *there is no God*, Psal. xiv. 1. For all will grant, that they are not chosen by God, who do not so much as believe that there is any God to choose them. Neither can it be imagined that the all-wise God should choose such fools as these to be with him, who will not so much as acknowledge him to be. And yet how many such fools have we amongst us, whose practices have so depraved their principles, that they will not believe there is any God, because they wish there was none? And when these are taken from amongst the called, I fear the number of the chosen amongst them will be much lessened.

2. Take out from amongst us all ignorant persons, that understand not the common principles of religion, nor the fundamental articles of that faith which they are called to: for that these are not chosen, is plain, in that though they be called by Christ, yet they know not what he would have them do, nor yet who it is that calls them. And therefore as God would have all men to be saved, so for that end he would have them come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. that is, he would have them know all such truths as himself hath revealed to them in his Gospel, as necessary to be known in

order to their eternal salvation, without which knowledge it is impossible for a man to perform what is required of him; for though a man may know his duty and not do it, no man can do his duty unless he first know it. And therefore gross ignorance and saving faith cannot possibly consist or stand together; for saving faith is always joined with, or puts a man upon sincere obedience to, all the commands of God. But how can any man obey the commands of God, who neither knows that God, whose commands they are, nor yet what these commands are which God would have him to obey? No, certainly, a blind man may as well follow his temporal calling, how intricate soever it be, as he that is grossly ignorant, the high calling of a Christian; for he is altogether incapable of it, and so not only unworthy, but unfit to be chosen to it. Hence God himself hath told us, that he is so far from choosing such as live and die in this manner without understanding, that he never will show them any mercy or favour. *For it is a people, saith he, of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour,* Isa. xxvii. 11. Neither doth he ever blame mankind for any thing in the world more than for not knowing, and therefore not considering him that made and feeds them, Isa. i. 2, 3. Hos. iv. 1. And that we may be still farther assured that he chooseth no such persons to dwell with him as do not know him and his commands, he hath given it under his hand, that he rejects them, saying, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children,* Hos. iv. 6.

That therefore no persons that are grossly ignorant, and live and die in that condition, are chosen to eternal salvation, I suppose, the premises considered, all will acknowledge. But, alas! how many such persons are there in the world, how many amongst ourselves? How many who are very cunning and expert in the management of any worldly business, but are mere novices or rather idiots in matters of true religion? Or, as the prophet words it, *Who are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge,* Jer. iv. 22. How many such ignorant and sottish people are there in every corner of the land, and in this city itself? where they do, or may hear the word of God read and expounded to them every day, and yet ask them seriously of the grounds of the Christian religion, and the reason of the hope that is in them, and they are no more able to give a satisfactory or rational answer, than if

they had never heard of any such book as the Bible in the world, or had been born and bred in the remotest corners of America, where the sound of the Gospel never yet came. But all such, how many soever they be, though they be called, they must stand aloof off, for so long as they are such we may be confident that they are not chosen. Insomuch, that should we take away no other from the number of the called, but only such as know not what they are called to, it would appear but too clearly to be true, that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen.

3. Take out from amongst us all vicious, profane, debauched, and impenitent persons, all that make a mock of sin, and that jeer at holiness, that live as without God in the world, as if they had neither God to serve nor souls to save; as if there was neither a hell to avoid nor a heaven to enjoy, and therefore make it their business to gratify their flesh, and to indulge their appetite with carnal and sensual pleasures, looking no higher than to be fellow-sharers with the brutes that perish; such as in their bewitching cup stick not to fly in the face of heaven itself, and dare challenge God himself to damn them; that make lying their usual dialect, and swearing their pleasing rhetoric; and are so far from being troubled for these their sins, that they take pleasure and delight in them; so far from being ashamed of them, that they make them their pride and glory, and so make it their pleasure to displease God, and their highest honour to dishonour him that is honour and perfection itself. For that no such persons as these who live and die in such notorious crimes upon earth, are chosen to live with God in heaven, none can deny that believes the Scriptures to be true, which in plain terms assures us of the contrary. *Know ye not, saith the apostle, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind; nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God,* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And St. John tells us, that only they who do the commandments enter into the city of heaven: but *without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie,* Rev. xxii. 14, 15. So that all such persons, without timely repentance, are most certainly excluded from the number of the chosen. And how many are there amongst us who allow themselves in some such sin or other; or rather where shall we find a man that doth not? But to all persons that continue in such sins, I may say, stand you by, you have no ground as yet to think

that you are chosen, but have rather all the reason in the world to believe, that if you go on in such a sinful course, you will never know what heaven or happiness is. But when all such are taken out of the number of the called, what a piteous scouting will be left behind! In plain terms, we have just cause to fear that ignorant and dissolute persons make the greatest part of those who are called Christians.

4. Take out from amongst us all hypocritical and false hearted persons, that seem indeed to be honest and good men, but still retain some secret sin or other which will as certainly keep them out of heaven as the most notorious or scandalous crime that is: such as our Saviour compares to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear very beautiful, *but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness*, Matt. xxiii. 27. Such whose outward conversation are altogether unblameable; so that no man can charge them with theft, perjury, drunkenness, uncleanness, and the like; but in the mean while, they are malicious, uncharitable, censorious, proud, self-conceited, disobedient to parents or magistrates, covetous, ambitious, and the like. And so though they be free from those sins which others are guilty of, yet they are guilty of as bad sins, which the others may be freed from. To which also may be added all such as make indeed a great show of piety, and seem mighty zealous for the little circumstances of religion, but neglect the weightier matters of the law, the love of God, mercy, justice and the like. But for all the vain hopes and high conceits that such persons may have of themselves, they are far from being such as the Gospel requires them, and by consequence from the number of the chosen here spoken of. For the Pharisees were such persons as these, and yet our Saviour himself tells us, *That except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God*, Matt. v. 20. And when he tells us elsewhere, *That except we repent we must all likewise perish*, Luke xiii. 3. his meaning is, not that we must repent of some, or many, or most, but of all our sins, and so repent of them as to turn from them; and so turn from all sin, as for the future to be holy in all manner of conversation, otherwise our Saviour himself assures us, that he will never save us, but we must perish without remedy.

Let any man consider this, and then tell me what he thinks of the number of the chosen, whether it be not very small indeed, in comparison of the many which are called. For not to speak of other parts of Christendom, all the people of this nation are called to the faith of Christ; and how many they are I cannot

say we all know, for it is past any man's knowledge. But where is the man amongst us all, that doth not harbour some secret lust or other in his bosom : yea, of the many men in this nation, where is he that can say with David, *I have kept myself from mine iniquity?* Or to use the words of the prophet, *Run ye to and fro through the streets of this city, and see now and know, and seek if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, that serveth the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind.* I do not deny but there are a great many professors of religion amongst us, who would fain be accounted more strict and holy than their neighbours, so as to be reckoned the religious ; as the friars and nuns are in the Church of Rome : but are they therefore to be esteemed the elect and chosen of God, because they fancy themselves to be so ? or rather is not their pride and self-conceitedness an argument, that they are not so ? Blessed be God for it, I have no spleen nor rancour against any of them, but heartily wish they were as truly good and holy as they would seem to be. But what ? Is not pride a sin ? Is not self-conceitedness a sin ? Is not irreverence in God's worship a sin ? Is not disobedience to magistrates a sin ? Is not uncharitableness or censoriousness a sin ? Certainly all these will be found to be sins another day. And therefore whatsoever pretences men make unto religion, if they allow themselves in such sins as these, they are as far from being in the number of the chosen, as the most dissolute and scandalous persons in the world. But when these too are removed from the number of the called, how few of them will appear to be chosen.

5. Yet once again. Take out all such as believe not in our Lord Jesus Christ, but being morally honest and faithful in performing their duty to God and man, trust more in their own good works than to his merit and mediation. For that all such are to be excluded, is plain from the whole tenor of the Gospel, which assures us, that there is no salvation to be had but only by believing in him. But if Christ should come this day to judgment, would he find faith upon earth ? Verily, I fear, he would find but very little, if any at all amongst us : he might, I believe, find some pretty strict and circumspect in obeying of his other laws, or at least endeavouring to do so. But for a man to do all that is required of him, and yet to count himself an unprofitable servant ; for a man to do all he can, and yet rest upon nothing that he hath done, but to depend wholly upon another, even upon Jesus Christ for life and happiness, this is hard indeed to flesh and blood, and as rare to find as it is to find a rose amongst the weeds and thistles of

a barren wilderness, or a diamond amongst the gravel upon the sea-shore; here and there I believe there may be found one, but so rarely, that they can scarce be termed any, be sure but very few in comparison of the many which are called.

Now let us put these things together, and we shall easily grant that this saying of our Saviour was but too true, *that many are called, but few chosen*. And to bring it closer to ourselves, we are all called to repent and believe the Gospel: now take out from amongst us all ignorant persons that have heard indeed, but understand not what they hear; all atheistical persons that believe not really that there is a God to judge them; all debauched sinners that live in open and notorious crimes; all pharisaical hypocrites that avoid open, but indulge themselves in secret sins, that have *the form, but not the power of godliness*; and all such who are as St. Paul was before his conversion, *as touching the righteousness of the law blameless*, but yet believe not in Jesus Christ. Take out, I say, all such persons as I have named from amongst us, and what a small number proportionably should we have left behind? How many would be excluded the presence of God, how few would continue in it? What cause should we then have to say with our Saviour, *that many are called, but few chosen*.

Having thus explained the meaning and confirmed the truth of this proposition, that many are called but few chosen, we must consider the reasons of it, how it comes to pass that of the many which are called there are but few chosen? a thing which I confess we have all just cause to wonder and admire at. Are not men all rational creatures? are they not able to distinguish betwixt good and evil? do not they understand their own interest? What then should be the reason that so many of them should be called and invited to the chiefest good, the highest happiness their natures are capable of, yet so few of them should mind or prosecute it, so as to be chosen or admitted into the participation of it? What shall we ascribe it to, the will and pleasure of Almighty God, as if he delighted in the ruin of his creatures, and therefore although he calls them, he would not have them come unto him? No, that cannot be; for in his revealed will, which is the only rule that we are to walk by, he hath told us the contrary in plain terms, and hath confirmed it too with an oath; saying, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his way and live*, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And elsewhere he assures us, that he would *have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. And therefore if we believe what God saith, nay, if we believe

what he hath sworn, we must needs acknowledge that it is his will and pleasure, that as many as are called, should be chosen and saved. And indeed if he had no mind we should come when we are called to him, why should he call us all to come? Why hath he given us his word, his ministers, his ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to him, if after all he was resolved not to accept of us, nor would have us come at all? Far be it from us, that we should have such hard and unworthy thoughts of the great Creator and Governour of the world; especially considering that he hath told us the contrary, as plainly as it was possible for him to express his mind unto us. I do not deny, but that according to the apostle, *known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts xv. 18. And that there are several passages in Scripture which intimate unto us God's eternal election of all that are truly pious, to live with him for ever. But it is not for us to be so bold and impudent, as to pry into the secrets of God, nor so curious as to search into his eternal and incomprehensible decrees; but we must still remember the words of Moses, *that secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but these things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of his law*, Deut. xxix. 29. Whatsoever is necessary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal salvation, is clearly revealed to us in the holy Scriptures; and therefore what we there read belongs unto us to know, neither are we to look any farther than to his revealed will. But God in the Scriptures doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elsewhere, that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Peter iii. 9. This is the revealed will of God, which we are to acquiesce in, and rest fully satisfied with, so as to act accordingly, without concerning ourselves about things that are too high for us, and no way belong unto us. And therefore it is not in his secret, but revealed will, that we are to search for the reasons of this proposition, that *many are called, but few chosen*.

Now in consulting the word of God, to find out the reasons of this so strange assertion, that *many are called, but few chosen*, I know no better or fitter place to search for them than this parable, which gave our blessed Saviour the occasion of asserting it; in which it is very observable, that he meddles not at all with any reasons *a priori*, deduced from the eternal decrees of his Father, but he only suggests to us the reasons *a posteriori*, drawn from the disposition and carriage of men, why so many of them are called, and yet so few chosen.

For the opening whereof we must know, that the end and intent of this parable was only to show the entertainment which his Gospel had then, and should still meet with in the world; many refusing to embrace it at all, and of those who embrace it, many still walking unworthy of it. So that the issue and consequence of it will be, that though many be called to it, there are but few chosen. And he hath so worded the parable, that we need not seek any farther for the reasons of this his conclusion from it, they being all most clearly couched in the parable itself; which that we may the better understand, I shall open and explain them particularly, so as to make them intelligible, I hope, to the meanest capacity.

The first reason therefore why so many are called, but so few chosen, is because they who are called to Christ, will not come unto him; for this is the first reason which our Saviour himself in the parable assigns for it; *The king, saith he, sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage, and they would not come, Matt. xxii. 3. And they would not come,* so that the great fault is still in the wills of men, which are generally so depraved and corrupt, that though they be called never so oft, and cannot but in reason acknowledge that it is their interest to come, yet they have so strange an averseness to the holiness and purity of the Gospel which they are called to, that they will not come unto it only because they will not; for here, they who were first bidden, give no reason of their refusal, only it is said, they would not come. And good cause why; for when we have searched into all the reasons imaginable, why men do not fully submit themselves to the obedience of the Gospel, they will all resolve and empty themselves into this, that they will not because they will not. Let ministers say what they can, let the Scripture say what it will, let God himself say what he pleases, yet sinners men are, and sinners they will be, in spite of them all; as the prophet rebuking the people for their sins, said, *But thou saidst, There is no hope: no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go, Jer. ii. 25.* And so it is to this day; we tell them of their sins, and the dangerous consequences of them; we tell them that they must not love the world, but seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first place; we tell them from Christ's own mouth, that except they repent and forsake their sins, they must perish; but they say in effect, that we had as good hold our tongues; for they have loved the world, and after it they will go; they have found pleasure in the commission of their sins, and therefore they will commit them: Christ calls them to come unto him, and they know no reason why they

should not, but howsoever they will not come. If we were but once willing, the work was done; for what our wills are really inclined to, we cannot but use the utmost of our endeavour to attain. But the mischief is, men read the Gospel, they hear Christ calling upon them to believe and obey it, but their wills are still averse from it; there is a kind of antipathy and contrariety within them, against such exact and real holiness as the Gospel requires from them. So that if they perish, they must blame themselves for it, it is their own choice; they choose and prefer their sins with all the miseries which attend them, before the Gospel of Christ, with all the glory and happiness which is offered in it; and therefore as God said to his people, *Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. so say I to these men, Repent, and believe the Gospel; for why will ye die, why will ye perish eternally? Have you any reason for it? none in the world but your own wills. Christ hath told you in plain terms, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,* John vi. 37. But if you will not come unto him, who can help that? Are not yourselves only in the fault? Will not your blood be upon your own heads? What could Christ have done more for you than he hath done? What could he have suffered more for you than he hath suffered? How could he call you to him more plainly or pathetically than he doth? But if after all this you will not come unto him, you must even thank yourselves for all the torments you must ere long suffer and undergo. And this is indeed the case of the greatest part of mankind, that though they be called and invited to partake of all the merits of Christ's death and passion, yet they will not come unto him. And this is the first and great reason why so many are called, and yet so few chosen, John v. 40.

2. The second reason is, because men do not really believe that they are invited to such glorious things as indeed they are, as our Saviour himself intimates in the parable. For when they who were bidden would not come upon the first invitation, as not believing the message which those servants brought them, the king sent forth other servants, saying, *Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage,* Matt. xxii. 4. When the first servants were not believed, he sent others with fuller instructions, giving them orders to acquaint the guests, that all things were now ready, and to assure them that it was to a marriage-feast, they were invited. But it seems, whatsoever the first or second servants could say, it was to no purpose; they would not believe them,

and therefore sent them away as they came ; whereby our Saviour exactly discovers to us the entertainment that his Gospel always did, and still would meet with in the world. Before his own coming into the world, he sent his prophets to invite mankind to accept of the terms propounded in it, and to call upon them to repent and turn to God, that their sins might be blotted out, and their souls admitted into the grace and favour of Almighty God, and so partake of eternal glory, which the prophets called men to, under the notion of a feast, *a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined*, Isa. xxv. 6. which they called all men to, saying, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*, Isa. lv. 1. But how their message was received, the same prophet declares, saying, *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Isa. liii. 1. and so it is since. For when the prophets could not be credited, God afterwards sent his apostles, and still to this day is sending servant after servant to invite men to grace and pardon, to heaven and eternal happiness. But we his ministers may still say with the prophet, *Who hath believed our report?* We tell men, that unless they repent and turn to God, iniquity will be their ruin ; we tell them also, that if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall be saved : and if they be holy here, they shall be happy hereafter. But what signifies our telling them of these things, if they believe not what we say ? And yet who doth ? Men give us the hearing, censure what they have heard, and that is all the use they make of it, never really or firmly believing any one truth that we make known or expound unto them ; and this being the case not only of some few, but of the greatest part of mankind, hence it comes to pass that so many are called and so few are chosen, even because they who are called do not believe it, and so it is all one with them whether they be called or no. Be sure God chooseth none but such as believe the word he sends unto them ; for, as the apostle saith, *God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith*, James ii. 5. If they be not rich in faith, they are not for his purpose ; and seeing there are but few that are so, hence of the *many which are called*, there are *but few chosen*.

3. Another reason why of the many which are called there are so few chosen, is because they have no real esteem or value for the things they are called to ; as it is in the parable, when the servants were sent to call upon them to make haste to the feast because all things were ready, it is said that they made light of it, ver. 5. They did not think it worth their while to

go, though it was to a feast, to a marriage-feast, yea, to the marriage-feast of so great a person as a king's son ; no, not though they were invited by the king himself unto it. Thus it was in ancient times, and thus it is still ; the King of heaven sends to invite men to his court, to lay aside their filthy garments, and to put on the robes that he hath prepared for them, that they may be holy as he is holy, and so live with him and be happy for ever. But they make light of such things as these ; they can see no such beauty in Christ, why they should desire him, no such excellency in God himself, why they should be in love with him ; and as for heaven, they never were there yet, and therefore care not whether they ever come there or no ; though they be called, they matter not whether they be chosen to it or no ; and hence likewise it is that of the many which are called, there are so few chosen.

4. Another reason is, because they who are called are generally addicted to the things of this life ; they have the serpent's curse upon them, to feed upon the dust of the earth, and therefore slight all the overtures that are made them of heaven and eternal happiness. As our Saviour himself intimates in this parable, saying, that *when they were invited they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise*, ver. 5. Thus we read of the Pharisees, that they being covetous, when they heard the words of Christ, they derided him, Luke xvi. 14. And thus it is to this day ; though men be called to Christ, they are so much taken up with worldly businesses, that they can find no time to come unto him ; but away they go again, one to his trade, another to his merchandise. These are the things that most men's minds are wholly bent upon, and therefore they will not be persuaded to leave them to go to Christ. It is true, if he called them to great estates, if he called them to a good bargain, if he called them to crowns and sceptres in this world, then they would all strive which should be chosen first. But the things that he calls us to are quite of another nature ; he calls us to repent of our sins, to believe in him, to contemn the world, to have our conversations in heaven. But these are things which men do not love to hear of, as being contrary to their earthly temper and inclinations ; and therefore we who are God's ministers may call our hearts out before they will set themselves in good earnest to mind them. Or to bring it home still closer to us, how often have we all been invited to that spiritual feast, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, but how few are there that come unto it, when the whole congregation is called to partake of it ? Scarce one in twenty think it worth their while to

stay, to have their share in it. What can be the reason of this, but that our minds are taken up with other things, which we fancy to be of far greater concernment to us than all the merits of Christ's death and passion. And therefore it is no wonder that so many of us are called, and so few chosen, seeing we ourselves choose the toys and trifles of this transient world, before all those real joys which in the Gospel we are called and invited to.

5. In the next place, many of them which are called, have so strange an antipathy to God and goodness, that they do not only neglect and slight their heavenly, in comparison of their earthly calling, but they hate and abuse such as are sent to call them, as our Saviour himself intimates, ver. 6. O barbarous cruelty! what hurt, what injury is done unto them? They are invited to a feast, and for this they are angry, and kill the messengers which are sent to invite them. Thus it hath been in all ages. This was the entertainment, this the requital that most of the prophets received for the divine message they brought to mankind, Matt. xxiii. 37. Yea, Christ himself, the Son and Heir of God, was put to death for inviting men to life and happiness; and so were his apostles too: and so it is to this day. There is still a secret malice and hatred in men's hearts against such as sincerely endeavour to preach the Gospel clearly and fully to them. We tell them of their sins, we acquaint them with the danger they are in, we call upon them to forsake and avoid them, we invite them to Christ, and so to heaven and eternal happiness; and for this many of them are angry with us and incensed against us. They may forgive us this wrong; I can assure them we intend them no evil, but all the good we do or can desire to our own souls; and whatsoever the success be, it is still our duty to call upon them, to advise them of their duty, and if possible reclaim them from their sins; and if they be angry with us for that, as many are, they cannot wonder at our Saviour's saying, that *many are called, but few chosen*.

6. The last reason which our Saviour gives in this parable, why *many are called, but few chosen*, is because of those who are called, and come too at their call, many come not aright; which he signifies by the man that came without his wedding garment, ver. 11, 12, 13. where although he mentions but one man, yet under that one is comprehended all of the same kind, even all such persons as have the Gospel preached to them, and so are called and invited to all the graces and privileges proposed in it, all such as profess to believe in Christ, and to expect happiness and salvation from him, yet will not come up

to the terms which he propounds in his Gospel to them, even to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called*, Eph. iv. 1. And indeed this is the great reason of all why of so many which are called there are so few chosen, because there are so few which do all things which the Gospel requires of them. Many like Herod will do many things, Mark vi. 20. and are almost persuaded to be Christians, as Agrippa was, Acts xxvi. 28. How zealous are some for, how violent are others against, the little ceremonies and circumstances of religion, and in the mean while neglect and let slip the power and substance of it? How demure are some in their carriage towards men, but irreverent and slovenly in the worship of Almighty God? How devout would others seem towards God, but are still careless and negligent of their duty towards men? Some are all for the duties of the first table without the second, others for the second without the first. Some are altogether for obedience and good works, without faith in Christ; others are as much for faith in Christ, without obedience and good works. Some would do all themselves, as if Christ had done nothing for them; others fancy that Christ hath so done all things for them, that there is nothing left for themselves to do; and so betwixt both these sorts of people, which are the far greater part of those who are called, either the merits or else the laws of Christ are slighted and contemned. But is this the way to be saved? No, surely: if I know any thing of the Gospel, it requires both repentance and faith in Christ, that we perform sincere obedience to all his laws, and yet trust in him, and him alone, for pardon, acceptance, and salvation. And whosoever comes short of this, though he be called, we may be sure he is not chosen; though he come to the marriage feast with those that are invited, yet wanting his wedding garment, he will be cast out again with shame and confusion of face. So that it is not our doing some, or many, or most of the things which the Gospel requires, that will do our business, unless we do all to the utmost of our skill and power. But where shall we find the man that doth so? What ground have we to acknowledge that our Saviour had but too much cause to say, *many are called, but few chosen*; which I fear is but too true, not only of others, but ourselves too.

I say not this to discourage any one: no, it is my hearty desire and prayer to the eternal God, that every soul of us might be chosen and saved. But my great fear is, that many think it so easy a matter to go to heaven, that if they do but say their prayers, and hear sermons now and then, they cannot miss of it, and therefore need not trouble themselves any

farther about it. But they must give me leave to tell them, that this will not serve their turn ; if it would, most of those which are called would be chosen too. Whereas our Saviour himself tells us, in plain terms, the contrary. And yet this should be so far from discouraging of us, that it should rather excite us to greater diligence about it than heretofore we may have used, as our Saviour himself intimates in his answer to this question, Luke xiii. 23, 24. And verily, what greater encouragement can we have than to consider, that though there be but few chosen, yet there are some ? For why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others ? Are not we all called to Christ ? Are not we all invited, yea, commanded to believe in his name, and obey his Gospel, that so we may partake of everlasting glory ? Let us then all set upon that work in good earnest, which we are called to. Let us but fear God, and keep his commandments, and believe in his Son for his acceptance of us, and then we need not fear, but though of the many others which are called there are but few chosen, yet we few who are all called shall be all chosen ; chosen to live with God himself, and Jesus Christ, and to sing forth his praises for evermore.

THOUGHTS

UPON

THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, OR THE BEATIFIC VISION.

SO long as we are in the body, we are apt to be governed wholly by its senses, seldom or never minding any thing but what comes to us through one or other of them. Though we are all able to abstract our thoughts when we please from matter, and fix them upon things that are purely spiritual; there are but few that ever do it. But few, even among those also that have such things revealed to them by God himself, and so have infinitely more and firmer ground to believe them, than any one or all their senses put together can afford. Such are the great truths of the Gospel, for which we have the infallible word and testimony of the supreme truth; yet seeing they are not the objects of sense, but only of our faith, though we profess to believe them, yet we take but little notice of them, and are usually no more affected with them, than as if there were no such things in being. Hence it hath pleased God, in great compassion to our infirmity, not only to reveal and make known such spiritual things to us, in plain and easy terms, but likewise to bring them as near as possible to our senses, by representing them to us under the names and characters of such sensible objects as bear the greatest resemblance to them; that we who are led so much by our senses, may by them also be directed how to apprehend those spiritual objects which he hath told us of, on purpose that we may believe them upon his word.

Thus he often useth the words, hand, eye, and the like, to signify his own divine perfections to us. And thus it was that our Saviour preached the Gospel to the people, by parables, and similitudes of things commonly seen and done among themselves. The prophets also frequently took the same course, as might be shewn by many instances; but one of the most remarkable is that in Mal. iv. 2. where the prophet in the

name of God speaking of Christ's coming into the world, expresseth it by the rising of the sun, saying, *To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.*

For that Jesus Christ is that Sun of righteousness here spoken of, is so plain from the context, and whole design of the prophet, that I need not insist upon the proving it; but shall only observe, that this being the last of all the prophets in the Old Testament, he shuts up his own, and all the other prophecies, with a clear prediction of Christ, and his forerunner John the Baptist, whom he calls Elijah or Elias; and concludes his prophecy with these words concerning him, *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth* (or rather the land) *with a curse*, Mal. iv. 5, 6. For that by Elijah is here meant John the Baptist, we are assured by Christ himself, Matt. xi. 14. And it is very observable, that as this prophet ends the Old Testament with a prediction of Elias, so St. Luke begins the New with a relation how John the Baptist was born, and so came into the world a little before Christ, as the morning-star that appeared before the rising of the Sun of righteousness.

But of the day which shall come at the rising of that glorious Sun, the prophet saith, that it *shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch*, verse 1. It will be a terrible day to those that shall obstinately refuse to walk in the light of it; they shall be all consumed, as we read the unbelieving Jews were at the destruction of Jerusalem, that happened soon after that sun was up. But then turning himself, as it were, to his own people, Almighty God here by his prophet cheers and comforts them, saying to them, *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, &c.* He shall arise to all; but to the other with such a scorching heat as shall burn them up; to these with healing in his wings, or rays, so as not to hurt, but heal them of all their maladies.

Now that which I chiefly design, by God's assistance, to shew from these words, is what thoughts they suggest to us concerning our blessed Saviour, by calling him *the Sun of righteousness*. But to make the way as plain as I can, we must first consider, to whom he is here said to *arise with heal-*

ing in his wings, even to those that fear the name of God; *i. e.* to those who firmly believing in God, and being fully persuaded of his infinite power, justice, and mercy, and also of the truth of all his threats and promises, stand continually in awe of him, not daring to do any thing willingly that may offend him, nor leave any thing undone that he would have them do. Such, and such only, can be truly said to fear God. And therefore the fear of God in the Scriptures, especially of the Old Testament, is all along put for the whole duty of man. There being no duty that a man owes, either to God or his neighbour, but if he really fears God, he will endeavour all he can to do it. But this necessarily supposeth his belief in God, and his holy word, or rather proceeds originally from it. *For he that cometh unto God*, so as to fear and obey him, *must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him*, Heb. xi. 6. So that as no man can believe in God, but he must needs fear him; so no man can fear God, unless he first believes in him. From whence it necessarily follows, that by those who are here said to fear the name of God, we can understand no other but only such as are possessed with a firm belief in him, and with a full persuasion of the truth and certainty of those divine revelations that he hath made of himself, and of his will to mankind, and therefore live accordingly.

Of these, and these only, it is here said, that to them *shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*. Not to any other; no other being able to see his light, nor capable of those healing influences that proceed from him. For though he be a sun, he is not such a sun as we see with our bodily eyes in the firmament, but *the Sun of righteousness*, shining in the highest heavens, beyond the reach of our senses, visible only to the eye of faith, the evidence of things not seen. In-somuch that although he be risen, and darts down his beams to this lower world continually, yet they who have not faith, can neither see him nor enjoy any more benefit by him, than as if he was not risen, or did not shine at all. As if a man be born stark blind, though the sun shines never so clear about him, he sees no more than he did before, but lives in the dark at noonday as much as at midnight; neither can ye ever make him understand what light or colours are; for having not that sense, by which alone such things can be perceived, he can never understand what you mean by such things, so as to form any true notion of them in his mind. So it is in our present case; though the sun of righteousness be risen, and shines most gloriously in the world, yet being the object only of our faith, without that a man can discern nothing of him. He may

perhaps talk of him as a blind man may talk of light, but all the while he knows not what he means by the words which he useth about him. For he useth them only as words in course, taken up from those he talks with, without having any effect or operation at all upon his mind; whereas they who really believe God's word, and what is there revealed concerning the Sun of righteousness, they see his light, they feel his heat, they experience the power and efficacy of his influences; and therefore, although they who have not faith (as few have) can be no way profited by what they shall hear or read of him, yet they who have, and act it upon what they hear or read out of God's holy word concerning him, they will find their thoughts and apprehensions of him cleared up, and their affections inflamed to him; so as to love and honour him for the future, as the fountain of all that spiritual life, and light, and joy they have, *For to them he will arise, with healing in his wings.*

He did not only arise once, but he continually ariseth to those who believe in God, and fear him. For thus saith the Lord, *To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.* It is true, he speaks more especially of his incarnation, or visible appearance in the world; but by this manner of speaking, he intimates withal that this Sun of righteousness is always shining upon his faithful people, more or less, in all ages, from the beginning to the end of the world. For in that it is said *he shall arise*, it is plainly supposed that he was the Sun of righteousness before, and gave light unto the world, though not so clearly as when he was actually risen. As we see and enjoy the light of the sun long before he riseth, from the first dawning of the day, though it grows clearer and clearer all along as he comes nearer and nearer to his rising: so the Sun of righteousness began to enlighten the world as soon as it was darkened by sin; the day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every age. Adam himself saw something of this light, Abraham more; *Abraham rejoiced to see my day*, saith this glorious Sun; *he saw it, and was glad*, John viii. 56. David and the prophets after him saw it most clearly, especially this, the last of the prophets: he saw this Sun in a manner rising, so that he could tell the people it would suddenly get above their horizon; *The Lord whom ye seek*, saith he, *shall suddenly come to his temple*, Mal. iii. 1. and acquaints them also with the happy influences it would have upon them, saying, in the name of God, *Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.*

The Sun of righteousness; that is, as I observed before,

Jesus Christ the righteous, who is often foretold and spoke of under the name and notion of the sun or star that giveth light unto the world. *There shall come a star out of Jacob*, said Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17. *and he shall be as the light of the morning when the Sun riseth*, saith David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. And the prophet Isaiah, speaking of his coming, saith, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined*, Isa. ix. 2. For that this was spoken of Christ, we have the authority of the Evangelist, Matt. iv. 16. To the same purpose is that of the same prophet, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee*, Isa. lx. 1, 2. *The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee. But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy glory*, ver. 19, 20. To which we may add the many places where Christ is called צמח, which we translate *the Branch*. As, *I will bring forth my servant the Branch*, Zech. iii. 8. *Behold the man, whose name is the Branch*, chap. vi. 12. *I will raise up to David a righteous Branch*, Jer. xxiii. 5. And *a Branch of righteousness*, chap. xxxiii. 15. In all which places the original word signifies also *the rising of the sun*, and is accordingly rendered by the LXX. *Oriens*, not that part of heaven where the sun riseth, but the sun itself as rising there. And so it is translated also both in the Syriac and Arabic versions. And where it is said, *In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful*, Isa. iv. 2. In the LXX. it is, *God shall shine forth*. In the Syriac, *The rising of the Lord shall be for glory*. In Arabic, *The Lord shall rise as the sun*. And that this is the true sense of the word in all these places, appears from the prophecy of Zacharias the father of John the Baptist; for speaking of Christ's coming, he expresseth it according to our translation, by saying, *The Day-spring from on high hath visited us*, Luke i. 78. But in the original it is the same word that the LXX. use in all the aforesaid places, *Oriens, the rising sun*. And it is much to be observed, that all the said places of the prophets are interpreted of the Messiah or Christ; by the Targum or Chaldee Paraphrase, made by the ancient Jews themselves; for צמח *the rising sun*, is there translated תשיחא *the Christ*, as if it was only another name for Messiah, the Saviour of the world. From all which it appears, that when the prophet here calls our Saviour Christ *the Sun of righteousness*, he speaks

according to the common sense and practice of the church at that time.

And verily he may well be called the Sun, both in respect of what he is in himself, and in respect of what he is to us. As there is but one sun in the firmament, it is the chief of all creatures that we see in the world. There is nothing upon earth but what is vastly inferior; the very stars of heaven seem no way comparable to it; it is the top, the head, the glory of all visible objects: in like manner, as there is but one Saviour in the world, he is exalted far above all things in it, not only above the sun itself, but above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. *All things are put under his feet, and he is given to be head over all things to the church*, Eph. i. 21, 22. The very angels, authorities, and powers of heaven, *are all made subject to him*, 1 Pet. iii. 22. And that is the reason that he is said to be at the right hand of God, because he is preferred before and set over the whole creation, next to the Almighty Creator himself, where he now reigns, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven and earth.

And as the sun is in itself also the most glorious, as well as the most excellent creature we see, of such transcendent beauty, splendor, and glory, that we cannot look stedfastly upon it, but our eyes are presently dazzled; so is Christ, *the Sun of righteousness*: when he was transfigured, *his face did shine as the sun*, Matt. xvii. 2. When St. John had a glimpse of him, *he saw his countenance as the sun that shineth in his strength*, Rev. i. 16. When he appeared to St. Paul going to Damascus at mid-day, *there was a light above the brightness of the sun shining round about him, and them that journeyed with him*, Acts xxvi. 13. And it is no wonder, *for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. and therefore must needs shine more gloriously than it is possible for any mere creature to do; his very body, by reason of its union to the divine person, *is a glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21. The most glorious doubtless of all the bodies in the world, as far exceeding the sun, as that doth a clod of earth; insomuch, that could we look upon our Lord as he now shines forth in all his glory in the highest heavens, how would our eyes be dazzled? our whole souls amazed and confounded at his excellent glory? The sun would appear to us no otherwise than as the moon and stars do, when the sun is up. And he that so far excels the sun in that very property, wherein the sun excels all other things, may well be called the sun: the sun by way of preeminence, the most glorious sun in the

world, in comparison whereof nothing else deserves to be called by that name. Neither may our blessed Saviour be justly called by this glorious name only for what he is in himself, but likewise from what he doth for us ; as may be easily demonstrated from all the benefits that we receive from the sun. I shall instance in some of the most plain and obvious.

First therefore, the sun we know is the fountain of all the light that we have upon earth, without which we could see nothing, not so much as the way that is before us, but should be always groping and stumbling in the dark, whereas by it we can discern every thing that is about us, or at any distance from us, as far as our sight can reach. In which respect our blessed Lord is the sun indeed ; *The light of the world*, John viii. 12. *The true light that lighteneth every one that cometh into the world*, c. i. 9. *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel*, Luke ii. 32. *A marvellous light*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Whereby we can see things that are not visible to the eye, as plainly as we do those that are. For *this Day-spring from on high*, this Sun of righteousness, hath visited us, *to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace*, Luke i. 78, 79. To shew us the invisible things of God, and direct us to all things belonging to our everlasting peace and happiness. He hath made them all clear and manifest to us in his Gospel. *But whatsoever maketh manifest is light*, Eph. v. 13. Wherefore he is said to have brought *life and immortality to light through the Gospel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. Because he hath there so clearly revealed them to us, that by the light of his holy Gospel we may see all things necessary to be known, believed, or done, in order to eternal life, as plainly as we can see the most visible objects at noon-day.

By this light we can see as much of the glory of God himself, as our mortal nature can bear. For *no man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. *Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*, Matt. xi. 27. So that no man ever had or can have any right knowledge of the true God, but only by his Son our Saviour Christ. But by this means, they that lived before might see him as by twilight ; we who live after this sun is risen, may see him by the clearest light that can be given of him, for he hath fully revealed and declared him to us in the Gospel.

By this glorious light we can see into the mystery of the eternal Trinity in unity, so as to believe that God the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost are one, one Jehovah, one God. That God the Father made all things at the first by his word, and still upholds and orders all things according to his will. That God the Son was made flesh, became man, and as such died upon the cross, and so offered up himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world ; that he rose again, went up to heaven, and is now there at the right hand of God ; that upon our repentance and faith in him, our sins are all pardoned, and he that made us is reconciled to us by the merits of his said death ; that by the power of his intercession which he now makes in heaven for us, we are justified or accounted righteous in him, before his, and in him our almighty Father ; that God the Holy Ghost abides continually with his church, moving upon, actuating and influencing the means of grace that are there administered ; that he sanctifies all that believe in Christ, leads them into all truth, comforts them in all their troubles, and assists them in doing whatsoever is required of them. These and many such great and necessary truths, as lay in a great measure hid before, are now, by the light of the Sun of righteousness shining in his Gospel, made so plain and evident, that all may see them, except they wilfully shut their eyes, or turn their backs upon them.

And though the sun in the firmament enlightens only the air, to make it a fit medium through which to see ; this glorious light that comes from the Sun of righteousness enlightens men's minds too, and opens their eyes, *to behold the wondrous things that are revealed in the law of God*, Psal. cxix. 18. And that too so effectually in some, that they likewise are able to enlighten others, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18. Insomuch that they also are the light of the world, Matt. v. 14. not originally in themselves, but by communication from him, as the moon is first enlightened by the sun, and then reflects its light to the earth.

Moreover, the sun is the first cause under God, not only of light, but also of all the life that is in any creature upon earth, without which nothing could live, no, not so much as a vegetable, much less an animal life ; for that which we call life, wherewith such creatures as have organs fitted for it are actuated and quickened, so as to be said properly to live, it all depends upon the heat and influences of the sun ; should the sun once cease to be, or to influence the world, all living creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Christ the Sun of righteousness the fountain of all spiritual life. *In thee*, saith David, *is the fountain of life ; in thy light we shall see light*, Psal. xxxvi. 9. Where we shall see that light and life in this

sense also go together; they both proceed from the same fountain, *the Sun of righteousness*; who therefore saith, *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*, John viii. 12. that light which hath life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; so that he is both light and life itself. *I am*, saith he, *the way, the truth, and the life*, John xiv. 6. And *our life*, as the apostle calls him, Col. iii. 4. *even the life of all that believe in him*. *The life that I now live in the flesh*, saith the same apostle, *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20. *And therefore he who believeth, and so hath the Son, he hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life*, 1 John v. 12.

From all which it appears, that *all men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. *But when any arise from the dead by faith, it is Christ that gives them life*, chap. v. 14. *Who come into the world on purpose that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*, John x. 10. more abundantly, that is, in the highest and most excellent manner that it is possible for men to live. For this life which the Sun of righteousness raiseth believers to is the life of righteousness, an holy, an heavenly, a spiritual, divine life; it is the life of faith, whereby they live to other purposes, and in a quite different manner from other men; they live to God, and not unto the world; they live in a constant dependence upon him, and submission to him; they live in a firm belief of his word, and sincere obedience to his laws; they live altogether in his service, so that *whether they eat, or drink, or whatsoever they do, they still do it to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. In short, they strive all they can to do the will of God upon earth, as the holy angels do it in heaven, and so have their conversation there, where their Saviour and their treasure is.

But this life is infused into them only by the rays of the Sun of righteousness, by that Holy Spirit which proceedeth from Christ, whereby they being born again, and made the children of light, thus walk in newness of life; and so it is nourished also, preserved, and strengthened only by him, who therefore calls himself *the bread of life*, John vi. 35, 48. And the bread of God, *which cometh from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, 33. *the living bread, of which if any man eat, he shall live for ever*, 51. And this bread which he gives is his flesh, *which he gave for the life of the world*, *ibid*. *For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; so that whoso eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood hath eternal life, and he will raise him up at the last day, that he may live for*

ever, v. 54, 55, 57. For *Christ is the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die*, c. xi. 25, 26. Though his body may die, yet not his soul. And his body also at the last day shall be raised again to life, by the power of this glorious Sun. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Seeing therefore that Jesus Christ is the fountain of the life of righteousness, the Author of that spiritual and eternal life which the righteous live; as the Sun is of our natural, he also may most properly be called the Sun, and the Sun of righteousness, as he is in the words before us. And so he may be likewise from his cheering and refreshing our spirits in the inward man, as the sun doth in the outward. *The light of the eyes*, saith the wise man, *rejoiceth the heart*, Prov. xv. 30. *And truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun*, Eccles. xi. 7. This we all find by daily experience, and so we do too, that the light and heat of the sun agitate or move our animal spirits in so benign and delicate a manner, that we are always more cheerful and pleasant when the sun shines clearly, than we are in a dark night or cloudy day. But in this the Sun of righteousness infinitely exceeds the other, for he is the fountain not only of some, but of all the true joy and comfort that his faithful people have or ever can have in the world. It all proceeds from him, whom having not seen they love, in whom, though now they see him not, yet *believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Peter i. 8. For upon their believing in him, as having been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification, he manifesteth himself and his special love and favour to them, in the pardon of their sins, and their reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their souls are filled, not only with unspeakable, but glorious joy, of the same nature with that which the glorified saints in heaven are continually transported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's countenance, and his causing his face to shine upon them, Psalm iv. 6. lxxvii. l. lxxx. 3. Numb. vi. 25. When the Sun of righteousness thus shineth upon them, refreshing and comforting their hearts, by the sweet influences of that Holy Spirit that proceedeth from him.

But the Sun doth not only refresh the earth, but makes it fruitful; it is by his means, under God, that plants grow and bring forth fruit, and that animals do the respective works of which God hath set them. So is Christ the cause or author of all the good or righteous works that are done in the world;

he himself saith, *without me you can do nothing*, John xv. 5. And his apostle could say upon his own experience, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13. And that the fruits, all the fruits of righteousness, are by Jesus Christ, or come from him, chap. i. 11. who therefore in this respect also may well be termed *the Sun of righteousness*.

To which we may likewise add, that as the works which God hath made upon earth by his power, although they have no light in themselves whereby they can be seen, yet they appear in all their beauty and colours by the sun reflecting his light upon them ; so the works which his servants do, by his assistance and grace, although they have no real worth, nor are exactly righteous in themselves, yet by the Sun of righteousness reflecting his righteousness upon them, they seem or are accounted righteous in the sight of God, or as St. Peter speaks, *they are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Peter ii. 5. without whom therefore there could be no such thing as righteousness seen upon earth, no more than there could be colours without light. But *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many are made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. both sincerely righteous in themselves, and accepted of as righteous before God, by his righteousness imputed to them. So that all righteousness, both as it is performed by men, and as it is approved of by God, comes only from Jesus Christ. And this seems to be the great reason wherefore he is here called in a peculiar manner the Sun of righteousness, and promised to arise to his faithful people *with healing in his wings*, that they may *grow up as calves in the stalls*; to show that it is by him only that they are healed of their infirmities, and restored to a sound mind, so as to grow in grace, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness, such righteousness as by him is acceptable to God, from whom they shall therefore at the last day receive the crown of righteousness, that crown which this Sun of righteousness hath procured for them.

Upon these, among many other accounts, Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind may truly be called the Sun of righteousness, as he is here by the Spirit of truth itself, for our admonition and comfort. For hereby we are put in mind how to think of our blessed Saviour, and to exercise our faith in him, so as to love and honour him with all our hearts, and to put our whole trust and confidence in him for all things necessary to our eternal salvation. Forasmuch as we are by this means given to understand, that what the sun is to this lower world, the same is Christ to his church. But the sun, as we have heard, is the most excellent, and most glorious thing that we

see in the world. It is the next cause, under God, of all the light that is in the air, and of all the life that any creatures live upon the earth. It is that which refresheth the earth, and makes it fruitful. It is that also which gives a lustre to all things that are about us, so as to make them pleasing and delightful to the eye.

And accordingly, whensoever I think of my blessed Saviour, the Sun of righteousness, I apprehend, or rather by the eye of faith I behold him in the highest heavens, there shining in glory and splendor infinitely greater than any mortal eye can bear, invested with supreme majesty, honour, and authority over the whole creation. I behold him there surrounded with an innumerable company of holy angels, as so many fixed stars, and of glorified saints as planets enlightened by him; all his satellites or servants waiting upon him, ready upon all occasions reflect and convey his benign influences or favours to his people upon earth. I see him yonder by his own light; I behold him displaying his bright beams, and diffusing his light round about, over his whole church, both that which is triumphant in heaven, and that which is militant here on earth; that all the members of it may see all things belonging to their peace. I behold him continually sending down his quickening Spirit upon those who are baptized into, and believe in his holy name, to regenerate them, to be a standing principle of a new and divine life in them. I behold him there manifesting himself, and causing his face to shine upon those who look up to him, so as to refresh and cheer their spirits, to make them brisk and lively, and able to run *with patience the race that is set before them*. I behold him there continually issuing forth his Holy Spirit, to actuate and influence the administration of his word and sacraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in grace, and be fruitful in every good word and work. I behold the Sun of righteousness shining with so much power and efficacy upon his church, that all the good works which are done in it, though imperfect in themselves, do, notwithstanding, appear through him as good and righteous in the sight of God himself, and are accordingly rewarded by him. In short, as the sun was made to rule and govern the day, so I behold the Sun of righteousness as governing his church, and ordering all things both within it and without it, so as to make them work together for the good of those who love God, till he hath brought them all to himself, to live with him in the highest heavens, where they also shall by his means, *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever*, Matt. xiii. 43.

Could we keep these and such like thoughts of our blessed Saviour always fresh in our minds, could we be always thus looking upon him, as the Sun of righteousness shining continually upon us and his whole church, what holy, what heavenly, what comfortable lives should we then lead? We should then despise the pomps and vanities of this wicked world as nothing, as less than nothing, in comparison of this most glorious Sun and his righteousness. We should then, with St. Paul, *count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord; and should count them but dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,* Phil. iii. 8, 9. We should then leave gazing upon the trifles of this lower world, and should be always looking up to this Sun of righteousness, so as to be enlightened by him, Psal. xxxiv. 5. with such a light as will discover to us the glories of the other world, together with the way that leads to it.

We should then abhor and detest the works of darkness, and walk as the children of light, and accordingly shine as lights in the world. And then we should have the light of God's countenance shining continually upon us, enlightening, enlivening, and refreshing our whole souls, and purifying both our hearts and lives, so as to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; in that everlasting light which comes from the Sun of righteousness, who liveth and reigneth, and shineth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever.

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CONTENTS
OF THE
RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE,
VOLUMES I. & II.
[FOR THE YEAR 1828.]

<i>Didactic and Miscellaneous.</i>	Pride.
A Sabbath in the Country.	Self-Knowledge.
On the Causes which increase the Prejudices of worldly Men against Religion.	The Water of Life.
Amusements.	Greatness of God.
Meditation.	Salvation.
Conversation.	Reflections on Scott's Life of Napoleon.
Difficulties in ascertaining the Character of Young Women, &c.	Last Days of Bonaparte.
Inconsistencies in the Conduct of Christians.	Commit thy Way unto the Lord.
On the Coming of the Son of Man.	Letters to the Young.
Religious Society and Conversation.	Effects of physical Temperament on religious Expression.
Fearful Constitution of Man.	Thanksgiving.
Natural History connected with Religion.	Poetry.
Religious Biography.	It is not a needless Alarm.
True and false Repose in Death.	Spirituality of the present Dispensation.
Principles more important than Impulses and Feelings.	The Bible and Lord Byron.
Mistaken Saint.	Moral Character of Christ.
Elijah's Journey.	The Heavenly Inheritance.
Dreams and spiritual Agency.	Sober-Mindedness.
Self-Consecration.	Decision of Character.
Parental Admonitions.	Evidence arising from Prophecy.
On the devotional reading of the Holy Scriptures.	Recognition of departed Souls in a separate State.
Christian Solace in the Time of Trial.	
Mystery of Godliness.	<i>Historical and Narrative.</i>
A few Rules for Practice.	Albigenses.
Character and Misery of an irreligious Youth.	Reformation in Ireland.
Fund for the Relief of the Waldenses.	Religion in Germany.
Error of Balaam.	Christianity in Calcutta.
On the Existence of God.	Protestants and Roman Catholics in Austria.
On the devotional reading of the prophetic Scriptures.	Roman Catholic Church in England, present State of.
Directions for reconciling Differences among Friends.	Japanese Books.
Advantages of Sunday Schools to the Teachers.	Education in Ireland.
Rules for a profitable Sabbath.	Religious Communities in Europe.
Importance of Trifles.	Jews in Russia.
Wisdom and Knowledge the Sources of Grief.	Missions in Southern Africa.
Advantages of an Acquaintance with the Evidences of Revelation.	Robert Taylor's Trial and Conviction.
On Sincerity.	A seasonable Supply.
Reflections on the Death of a Friend.	Conversion of a Buddhist Priest.
Standard and Test of true Piety.	Oriental Cruelty, Apathy, and Brutality.
The angelic World.	Ruins of Babylon.
Thoughts on Deism, and What is Truth?	Popery on the Continent.
Millennial Reign of Christ.	Population of the Earth, according to its different Religions.
Knowledge and intellectual Habits considered in Relation to Human Life.	Religion, Literature, and Philosophy of the Mahometans.
The last Journey.	Progress of Education in Europe.
Self Examination.	Survey of Christianity in the Indian Seas.
Preaching the Gospel.	Irish Reformation.
Conversion of St. Paul.	Remarkable Jewish Sect.
Adulation and Calumny.	Ravages of Locusts.
Christians are Seward's.	A Visit to the Seven Churches of Asia.
Christian Ethics.	Thomson's Letters from South America.
Christian Churches should be more missionary.	The Celtic Druids.
Perverse Disputings.	Gipsies in England.
The Old Maid.	Locusts.
Of the Olympic Games.	Superstitions of India.
Heathen Fortitude and Christian Magnanimity.	Religion of the Indians.
The irreparable Loss.	Protestantism in Bohemia.
Fidelity to the Dying.	French Protestants and Jesuits.
Letter of Mr. De Courcy.	Catholic Clergy of France.
Christianity essentially missionary.	Moral Statistics of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.
"Cui Bono?" Men.	African Bushmen.
Last Hours of condemned Felons.	Letters from Italy.
Grace of Humility.	Russia--Petersburgh.
Simplicity.	Ramble among the Mountains of Scotland.
Motives to the Study of the Holy Scriptures.	The Druids.
Christian Missions.	Fall of Popery and Mahomedanism not just at hand.
The Avenger saved.	Declaration to the Lutheran Churches.
Man the Image of the Deity.	Gipsy Camp.
Some Evidences of Grace.	Babylon Destroyed.
	Clapperton and Laing.
	Bartholomew Massacre.
	Converted Gipsies.
	Walsh's Travels in Transylvania.
	Religious and Benevolent Societies.
	Indian Suttees.

Sabbath Schools of yore.
Mrs. Kilham's Visit to Sierra Leone.
Twenty-fourth Report of the British
and Foreign Bible Society.
Present State of the Jews.
Religion of the ancient Britons.

Biblical.

Prophecies of Scripture relative to the
Mahometans.
Internal Evidence of revealed Reli-
gion.
Daniel's historical Prophecies.
Mosaic and other ancient Accounts of
Leprosy.
Illustrations of Scripture.
Calendarium Palestinæ.
State of Society before the Deluge.
Biblical Illustrations.
Cain.
Offence of David in numbering the
People.
Evangelists and Josephus.
Accuracy of the sacred Writers.
Scripture Natural History.
Imprisonment and Deliverance of Pe-
ter.
Offering up of Isaac.
Hebrew Government.
Divine Legation of Moses.
Prophetic Description of Modern Infi-
dels.
Prophecy of Balaam.
Scripture Facts and Pagan Antiquities.
Anecdote.
Autograph of Ezra.
Oriental Fragments.
Primeval Curse.
Flaming Sword.
First Fruits.
Sacred Geography.
Hebrew Bible.
Critical Remarks.
Prophetic Scriptures.

Biographical.

Mrs. Maria Calder.
John Mason Good.
Baron de Stael.
Lekh Richmond.
Martin Bos.
Robert Hall.
John Frederick Oberlin.
Rev. Robert Pollock.
John Mason Good.
Robert Raikes, Esq.
Dr. Johnson's religious Character.
Rev. Dr. Parr.
Robert Montgomery.
Lekh Richmond.
Rev. Joseph Wolf.
James Montgomery.
Robert Greathead.
Zuinglius.

Reviews.

Scott's History of the Church of Christ.
Confessions of a Gamester.
Memoirs of Urquhart.
Hogg's Economy of Grace.
Heber's Hymns.
Pelican Island.
Idolatry, a Poem.
Hewitt's Desolation of Eyam.
Thomson's Letters on South America.
Pollock's Course of Time.
Biblical Researches and Travels in
Russia.
M'Crie's Reformation in Italy.
Jay's Christian contemplated.
Dealtry's Sermons.
Monthly Lectures on the Evidences of
Revelation.
Teinkowski's Russian Mission.
Townley's Reasons of the Laws of
Moses.
Taylor on Transmission of ancient
Books.
Fincher's Achievements of Prayer.
Faber on the Origin of expiatory Sac-
rifice.
Burder's Village Sermons.
March's Early Life of Christ.
Montgomery, as a sacred Poet.

Hug's Introduction to the New Testa-
ment.
Hampden's Philosophical Evidence of
Christianity.
Slater's rural Pictures and miscellane-
ous Poems.
Morell's Elements of the History of
Philosophy and Science.
Taylor's Elements of Thought.
Dawson's Christian Astronomer.
Henderson's Biblical Criticism.
Cecil's Remains.
Montgomery's Omnipresence of the
Deity.
English Harmony of the Four Evange-
lists.
Comprehensive Bible.
The Antidote; or Memoirs of a modern
Freethinker.
Connexion of Christianity with human
Happiness.
Graham's Practical Sermons on the
Ten Commandments.
Mudge's Memorial of ministerial La-
bour.
Orme on the Blasphemy against the
Holy Spirit.
The Christian Year.
Beechey's Expedition to the Coast of
Africa.
Three Years' Residence in Italy.
Payne's Elements of mental and moral
Science.
Pringle's Ephemerides.
Bridge's Exposition of Psalm CXIX.
Townley's Reasons of the Laws of
Moses.
Taylor's Process of historical Proof.
Le Bas's Considerations on Miracles.
Wood's Difficulties of the Infidel.
Craig's Sermons on Practical Subjects.
Biblical Encyclopedia.
Wardlaw, Grinfield, Taylor, and Bar-
row, on the Criminality of Unbelief.
Russell's Connexion of Sacred and
Profane History.
Good's Life and Writings.
Marsh on Prophecy.
Philips's Researches in South Africa.
Course of Time.
Dr. Owen's Dying Thoughts.
Benton's Testimonies of the Ante-
Nicene Fathers.
Boothroyd's Explanation of Psalm
xxxvii. 25.
One of Barrow's Sermons.
Smith on the Sacrifice and Priesthood
of Christ.
Dr. Lardner's Works.
Moase's Moral Creation.
Lothian's Expository Letters.
Leslie's Vision of the heavenly World.
Taylor on Historical Proof.
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 Cain.
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 To a Lady in her last Illness.
 Why hast thou forsaken me?
 My God, I love to meditate on thee.
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 Psalm cxxvi.
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